

# MODERN CHESS Vladimir Tukmakov PREPARATION



PREPARATION

The diagram consists of four horizontal bars of different colors: red, purple, green, and blue. Each bar has a large arrow pointing to the right. The red bar is at the top, followed by the purple bar, then the green bar, and finally the blue bar at the bottom. The arrows are also colored to match their respective bars. The text 'PREPARATION' is written in white on the red bar, 'OPENING' in white on the purple bar, 'MIDDLEGAME' in white on the green bar, and 'ENDGAME' in white on the blue bar.

OPENING

MIDDLEGAME

ENDGAME

GETTING READY FOR  
YOUR OPPONENT IN  
THE INFORMATION AGE

NEW  IN CHESS

## Modern Chess Preparation



**Vladimir Tukmakov**

# **Modern Chess Preparation**

## **Getting Ready for Your Opponent in the Information Age**

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# Foreword

## Preparation: the key to victory

Chess is sometimes described as a model of life. Garry Kasparov even devoted a weighty tome to that topic. In this book, however, the author will try to avoid such a temptation. The subject will be exclusively the preparation for a game of chess or, at most, the preparation for a life in chess.

A game of chess is a struggle between two individuals. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of your opponent, and having a sober awareness of your own shortcomings, will pay dividends at any level, for beginners up to World Champions. Even if you and the person sitting opposite you have only recently grasped the rules of the game, knowing a simple mechanism – bringing the queen out to h5 and the bishop to c4 with mate on f7 to follow – can bring fantastic results when you're just starting out. Of course, sooner or later your opponent, puzzled by such a turn of events, will either by himself or with the help of a chess manual demonstrate the inadequacy of such cavalier attacks. And the weapon that had brought lightning victories will backfire against its owner. However, having tasted such success you'll have caught the preparation bug, and you won't be able to stop yourself looking for more sophisticated means of surprising your opponent. That constant battle between the sword and the shield, which never relents even for a day, is the essence of the art of modern chess preparation.



Over the last hundred years and more chess has travelled a long way from coffee-house games played for small stakes to become a complex, multi-faceted activity based on an unusual mixture of art, sport and science. As chess has developed the sporting component has squeezed out art to an ever-greater degree, while the recent appearance and rapid improvement of computer programs has given chess a new and unexpected boost.

With the emergence of the first official World Champion in 1886 the battle for that coveted title became the goal and meaning of life for many, adding spice and drama to the development of chess. World Championship matches were often turning points in the wonderful game's development.



The first part of this book reflects the complex journey chess players have undertaken from the game's amateur roots to its current professional status. There's a theory that claims the chess World Champions couldn't have been more representative of the epochs in which they lived, but it's just a beautiful hypothesis. Steinitz, Lasker and Capablanca don't provide the most convincing of evidence for it. Back then chess was only taking its first steps on the road to 'statehood'. The laws of this specific realm of human activity were just beginning to be established and had little in common with the processes taking place in parallel in real life. The more professional chess became the more it started to depend on the realities of the surrounding social environment.

The contribution individual chess players have made to establishing and developing the art of preparation is far from proportional to their sporting achievements; there are different heroes and prize-winners. In the conventional ranking of historical chess players Jose Raul Capablanca is above Max Euwe, while the position of Alexander Alekhine is incomparable to that of Akiba Rubinstein. In this book, however, the name of Euwe is mentioned much more often than that of the Cuban genius, and Rubinstein's opening discoveries are placed on a par with the creative achievements of the Fourth World Champion.

An amazing harmony was attained between chess champions and society in the Soviet Union. It's no accident that it was thanks to Soviet chess players, headed by Mikhail Botvinnik, that a breakthrough was achieved in treating chess as a serious profession, while preparation became systematic. Botvinnik, Smyslov, Tal, Petrosian, Spassky, Karpov and Kasparov – all of them brought something new to the art of preparation.

Paradoxical as it sounds, the contribution of the universally-recognised chess geniuses is less significant in this regard. Robert Fischer was no exception, although his dominance over his contemporaries was overwhelming. The 1972 match against Boris Spassky put a stamp on the American's hegemony, while at the same time inaugurating an era of total confrontation in chess. Karpov's matches that followed against Kortchnoi and Kasparov were even fiercer, demanding previously unprecedented mental resilience from the players. Opening preparation also reached a new level. In Karpov's matches against Kasparov it became the norm for players to adopt one and the same system with both colours, while games would often end before the home analysis had run out. It was no accident that the clash between those two great players and arch-rivals coincided with the dawn of the computer era in chess.

A separate chapter has been devoted to modern chess preparation and the ever-growing role of the computer. This author still has a good recollection of methods of preparation that you'd be hard-pressed to describe as anything other than archaic nowadays. It would be naive to underestimate the influence of com-

puter programs on the game, but at times unconditional respect for the evaluations of our Metal Friend (or MF, as it will feature in this book) is combined with a note of irony. After all, for the moment it's still humans who decide the fate of a game of chess.

Finally, the concluding part of this book is devoted to games where the fate of a tournament, match or sometimes even a player's whole sporting career was decided. The secret of success in chess can be strange and sometimes elusive. The components of the mysterious formula are well-known: talent, memory, will-power (character), capacity for work and also good health. But the final outcome is by no means decided simply by a sum of the parts, and it seems impossible to construct a formula based on the rankings of past and present chess players.

There's also another component that's by no means unimportant – a love of chess. That works as a powerful battery to fuel memory, hard work and, to a certain extent, will-power. But if love is irrational and talent is granted from above, then all the rest can and needs to be trained and developed. This book was conceived as a guide to that extremely difficult and subtle process.

Although a modern chess player's preparation consists mainly of working on the opening, this book isn't solely about that. Firstly, chess fans aren't only made up of professionals who devote all their time to chess. Secondly, and this is perhaps the main point, chess isn't limited to the opening. So although the emphasis is placed on theoretical preparation, absolutely all the games in this book are given in full. The overwhelming majority of the examples are taken from the games of top-class players, so it's very interesting to follow how the advantage gained in the opening stages is ultimately converted into a win. It's no less instructive to analyse the games in which for whatever reason that failed to happen.

This book is intended for all those who've kept faith in their capacity for self-improvement and who want to increase their practical strength. Of course, the potential of those who've linked their professional future to chess inevitably differs from that of those who spend time on their favourite game only as a hobby. For the benefit of those 'club players' each chapter is followed by special recommendations and advice. If the reader can gain something new and useful for him/her then the author will consider his task accomplished.

Vladimir Tukmakov  
Odessa, June 20 12



# Chapter 1 – The Evolution of Preparation

'Do you think I'm morally obliged to play the same defence I played against Chigorin?' 'You're not obliged, but the public expects you to defend your principles.' Such, or approximately such, was the dialogue between Wilhelm Steinitz and Isidor Gunsberg in 1891.

Afterwards Steinitz played the move 6...♞f6, which had ended in a fiasco for him in his game against Chigorin, played over the very same days (!) by telegraph.

[C52]

**Isidor Gunsberg**  
**Wilhelm Steinitz**

New York Wch-m 1891 (12)

Game 1

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. e2-e4  | e7-e5  |
| 2. ♘g1-f3 | ♘b8-c6 |
| 3. ♙f1-c4 | ♙f8-c5 |
| 4. b2-b4  | ♙c5xb4 |
| 5. c2-c3  | ♙b4-a5 |
| 6. 0-0    |        |



This is the point at which the famous dialogue we began our discussion of the art of preparation with took place.

6. ... ♞d8-f6?!

The traditional lines of defence are 6...d6 7.d4 ♙b6 or 6...♘f6.

7. d2-d4 ♘g8-h6?!

7...♘ge7 8.d5! (8.♞a4 ♙b6 9.♙g5 ♞d6 10.♘a3 exd4 11.♘b5 ♞g6) 8...♘d8 9.♞a4 ♙b6 10.♙g5 ♞d6 11.♘a3 c6 12.♞ad1 ♙b8 13.♙xe7 ♙xe7 14.d6+ ♙f8 15.♞b4.

8. ♙c1-g5 ♞f6-d6

8...♞g6 9.d5 ♘b8 10.♘a3!? f6 11.♙xh6 ♞xh6 12.d6.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 9. d4-d5   | ♘c6-d8 |
| 10. ♞d1-a4 | ♙a5-b6 |
| 11. ♘b1-a3 | c7-c6  |



11...0-0 12.♙e2 f6 13.♘c4 ♞e7 14.♙xh6 gxh6 15.d6.

12. ♙c4-e2!

12.♞ad1 ♞g6 13.♙xd8 ♙xd8 14.dxc6 bxc6 15.♘xe5 ♞f6 16.f4 ♙c7.

12. ... ♙b6-c7

12...♞c7 13.♘c4 f6 14.♙xh6 gxh6 15.♘fxe5! fxe5 16.♙h5+ ♘f7 17.♞a3.

13. ♘a3-c4 ♞d6-f8



14. d5-d6      ♖c7xd6  
15. ♘c4-b6      ♜a8-b8  
16. ♛a4xa7



16. ...      ♘h6-g4

16... ♖e6 17. ♖c1! ♘g8 18. ♖a3 c5  
19. ♜ad1.

17. ♘f3-h4!      ♘d8-e6  
18. ♖e2xg4      ♘e6xg5  
19. ♘h4-f5      ♘g5-e6  
20. ♜f1-d1      ♖d6-c7  
21. ♘b6-a8!      ♜b8xa8  
22. ♛a7xa8      ♖e8-d8  
23. ♜d1xd7+      ♖d8xd7  
24. ♜a1-d1+      1-0

Nowadays it's not so much the game itself, but the circumstances surrounding it, which are liable to provoke nothing but bewildered admiration. It shouldn't be forgotten that we're not talking about a coffeehouse game for meaningless stakes, but a match for the World

Championship. Of course, back in those idyllic times the struggle for the world chess crown was very far-removed from the total battle on all fronts it became in the second half of the twentieth century. But still... what's so remarkable about the conversation during the game is not simply the fact that it took place at all – today something similar is simply inconceivable – but the content, which is amazingly succinct for such a short conversation.



Wilhelm Steinitz

Just imagine that phantasmagorical situation: the World Champion with child-like directness asks his opponent if he's obliged to play a dubious move that had already cost him one defeat. And the challenger, who of course is dreaming of nothing other than seizing the title, replies: yes, you know, there are things that are more important than titles and prizes. And the Champion dutifully complies with his opinion! However, even if that remarkable conversation never *actually* took place, it would certainly have been worth inventing it, as it gives the best possible characterisation of the chess manners

of the time. Chess, in the form we know it today, was only starting to be established back then, and one of the first to strive to give it a respectable image, with the help of certain principles and theories, was Steinitz.

As George Bernard Shaw said: 'The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man.' Wilhelm Steinitz was one of those 'unreasonable' men Shaw talked about. Chess was going through a Romantic era when the formulation of principles and theories was more important than individual moves and even sporting goals. Manifestos and declarations stood out for their pathos and paradox. Steinitz: 'A win by an unsound combination, however showy, fills me with artistic horror'. He probably had in mind combinations that didn't fit into his stated theory of positional play. Exceptions could and should be ignored – long live the rules! For the sake of them he sacrificed his doubts and points – as in the game above.

[C65]

**Wilhelm Steinitz**

**Mikhail Chigorin**

Havana Wch-m 1892 (4)

Game 2

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. e2-e4  | e7-e5  |
| 2. ♖g1-f3 | ♜b8-c6 |
| 3. ♙f1-b5 | ♜g8-f6 |
| 4. d2-d3  |        |

A more-than-modern opening – the Berlin Defence. Despairing of finding an edge in the complex endgames arising after 4.0-0 ♜xe4, 21st-century grandmasters have also often chosen this modest continuation.

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 4. ...    | d7-d6  |
| 5. c2-c3  | g7-g6  |
| 6. ♞b1-d2 | ♙f8-g7 |



7. ♞d2-f1!?

Of course 7.0-0 was asking to be played, but in that case you'd get a typical Ruy Lopez structure on the board, and then it's perfectly possible the game would not have ended up in this book.

- |             |     |
|-------------|-----|
| 7. ...      | 0-0 |
| 8. ♙b5-a4!? |     |

Preparing to transfer the Ruy Lopez bishop to its usual c2-square. In the second game of the match, after 8.♞e3 d5! 9.♚c2 the queen ended up having to occupy that square.

- |        |        |
|--------|--------|
| 8. ... | ♞f6-d7 |
|--------|--------|

A rather elaborate plan. Chigorin's idea: to switch this knight to e6, preventing the d3-d4 advance while simultaneously preparing ...f7-f5. The Russian Champion's play was simpler and more energetic in the 14th game of the match: 8...d5 9.♚e2 ♚d6 10.♞g3 ♙e6.

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 9. ♞f1-e3 | ♞d7-c5 |
|-----------|--------|

9...f5!? 10.b4 (10.exf5 gxf5 11.♞d5) 10...f4 11.♞d5 g5.

10. ♖a4-c2 ♘c5-e6



Black has everything prepared for the planned ...f7-f5 break. However, instead of preventing that advance Steinitz unexpectedly becomes active on the king-side himself. An absolutely new way of handling the position for that time!

11. h2-h4! ♘c6-e7

11...f5!? 12.h5 (12.exf5 gxf5 13.d4!) 12...f4 13.♘d5 g5 14.h6 ♙f6 15.g3!.

12. h4-h5 d6-d5

12...g5!? 13.h6!±.

13. h5xg6 f7xg6?

A serious mistake. Chigorin has been tempted into opening the f-file, ignoring much more significant and long-lasting positional factors. It was precisely in the strategic approach to the game that Steinitz's superiority over his opponents was most evident. Of course he should have played 13...hxg6, although after 14.♘g4! (14.♙e2!?) 14...dxe4 15.dxe4 ♙xd1+ 16.♙xd1 f6 17.♘h6+ ♙xh6 18.♙xh6 White's position is better.

14. e4xd5 ♘e7xd5

15. ♘e3xd5 ♙d8xd5

16. ♙c2-b3±

The drawbacks of Black's 13th move are becoming obvious. Apart from everything else, the pressure on the a2-g8 diagonal is extremely unpleasant.

16. ... ♙d5-c6

17. ♙d1-e2 ♙c8-d7

Nothing is altered by 17...a5 18.a4 ♙b6 19.♙c4.

18. ♙c1-e3!

Not allowing himself to be tempted by the line 18.♘xe5? ♙xg2 19.♘xd7 ♙xh1+ 20.♘d2 ♘h8 21.♙xe6 ♙h2 22.♘xf8 ♙xf8 23.♙e1, which after 23...♙e8! would have led to an unclear position.

18. ... ♙g8-h8

19. 0-0-0!

White's unconventional approach has brought about a position where nothing any longer hints at the opening – the Ruy Lopez. The main thing, however, is that his actions have led to a big and perhaps decisive advantage.

19. ... ♙a8-e8

20. ♙e2-f1!?

Preparing the d3-d4 break.

20. ... a7-a5?!



As becomes clear, this is a loss of time. Black's best chance was probably

20...♘f4 21.♘g5 (21.d4!? ♙g4!  
22.♘g5 is also interesting) 21...h5! and  
the potential for resistance is far from  
exhausted.

### 21. d3-d4!

Now this long-awaited break has  
gained in strength.

21. ... e5xd4  
22. ♘f3xd4 ♙g7xd4

Everything else loses even more  
straightforwardly: 22...♘xd4  
23.♙xh7+! ♚xh7 24.♙h1+-;  
22...♙a6 23.♙c4 ♙a8 24.♘f3+-;  
22...♙e4 23.♘f3! ♙c6 24.♙d3.

### 23. ♙d1xd4! ♘e6xd4?

Allowing a spectacular finish, but after  
the more stubborn 23...♙e7 24.♙dh4  
things are also bad for Black.

24. ♙h1xh7+! ♚h8xh7  
25. ♙f1-h1+ ♚h7-g7  
26. ♙e3-h6+ ♚g7-f6  
27. ♙h1-h4+ ♚f6-e5  
28. ♙h4xd4+ 1-0

It's mate next move.

Steinitz, uncompromising but some-  
what dogmatic in his views, was suc-  
ceeded by Emanuel Lasker. The latter had  
little interest in artificial theories and  
was unafraid of exceptions. 'The strictest  
rules in chess are exceptions' – Lasker  
could easily have been the author of  
Tartakower's paradox. Practical games  
were the touchstone against which theo-  
ries were tested. If a move that fitted per-  
fectly with positional postulates turned  
out not to be the best, so much the  
worse for principles. Chess wasn't pri-  
marily a confrontation between pieces  
governed by immutable laws, but a duel  
between the personalities controlling

those pieces. It was a battle, and in a bat-  
tle what matters is the result.

The psychology of the battle and the  
psychology of the players – that was  
what appealed to the new World Cham-  
pion. His famous game against  
Capablanca in the 1914 St Petersburg  
tournament is the best illustration of  
the new approach. The young Cuban,  
who was confidently leading the tour-  
nament, needed only not to lose with  
Black against the current World Cham-  
pion in order to claim overall tourna-  
ment victory. Everyone expected Lasker  
to play aggressively, but the opening  
variation he chose turned out to be a  
complete surprise to everyone, includ-  
ing his opponent. It seemed that for  
Capablanca, already back then consid-  
ered a first-class master of play in sim-  
ple positions, there would be no diffi-  
culty defending Black's position. How-  
ever, it all turned out to be much more  
complicated.

[C68]

**Emanuel Lasker**

**Jose Raul Capablanca**

St Petersburg 1914 (7)

Game 3

1. e2-e4 e7-e5  
2. ♘g1-f3 ♘b8-c6  
3. ♙f1-b5 a7-a6  
4. ♙b5xc6 d7xc6





## 5. d2-d4

5. ♖c3 f6 6.d4 exd4 7. ♖xd4 ♖xd4  
8. ♘xd4.

5. ...	e5xd4
6. ♖d1xd4	♖d8xd4
7. ♘f3xd4	♘f8-d6
8. ♘b1-c3	♘g8-e7
9. 0-0	0-0
10. f2-f4	♖f8-e8

10...f5 11.e5 ♘c5 12. ♘e3 ♘xd4  
13. ♘xd4 b6.

11. ♘d4-b3 f7-f6



## 12. f4-f5!

12. ♘e3 ♘d5!.

12. ... b7-b6

12...♘d7 13. ♘f4 ♖ad8.

13. ♘c1-f4



13. ... ♘c8-b7?!

13...♘xf4! 14. ♖xf4 c5! 15. ♖d1 ♘b7  
16. ♖f2 ♖ad8 17. ♖fd2 ♖xd2 18. ♖xd2  
♘c6 19. ♖d7 ♖c8 20. ♘d5? ♘e5.

14. ♘f4xd6 c7xd6  
15. ♘b3-d4 ♖a8-d8?!

15...♘c8! 16. ♖ad1 c5 17. ♘b3  
(17. ♘e6 ♘xe6 18.fxe6 ♖ad8 19. ♘d5  
♘c6) 17...d5! (17...♖d8!?) 18. ♘xd5  
♘xd5 19.exd5 ♖e5=.

16. ♘d4-e6 ♖d8-d7  
17. ♖a1-d1 ♘e7-c8?!

17...c5!? 18. ♘d5 ♘xd5 19.exd5 b5.

18. ♖f1-f2 b6-b5  
19. ♖f2-d2 ♖d7-e7  
20. b2-b4 ♖g8-f7  
21. a2-a3



21. ... ♘b7-a8?

21...♖xe6 22.fxe6+ ♖xe6.

22. ♖g1-f2 ♖e7-a7  
23. g2-g4 h7-h6  
24. ♖d2-d3 a6-a5?!  
25. h2-h4 a5xb4  
26. a3xb4 ♖a7-e7  
27. ♖f2-f3 ♖e8-g8  
28. ♖f3-f4 g7-g6  
29. ♖d3-g3 g6-g5+

29...gxf5 30.exf5 d5 31.g5! hxg5+  
32.hxg5 fxg5+ 33.♖xg5+ ♕f8 34.f6  
♚a7 35.♗e5!+-.

30. ♖f4-f3      ♖c8-b6  
31. h4xg5      h6xg5  
32. ♚g3-h3!

32. ♚xd6?! ♖c4 33.♚d1 ♚h8.

32. ...      ♚e7-d7

32...♖c4 33.♚h7+ (33.♗g3)  
33...♗e8 34.♚a1 ♚b7 35.♖c7+! ♗d7  
36.♚xe7+ ♗xe7 37.♚a7.

33. ♖f3-g3!      ♗f7-e8  
34. ♚d1-h1      ♚a8-b7



35. e4-e5!      d6xe5  
36. ♖c3-e4      ♖b6-d5  
37. ♖e6-c5      ♚b7-c8  
38. ♖c5xd7      ♚c8xd7  
39. ♚h3-h7      ♚g8-f8  
40. ♚h1-a1      ♗e8-d8  
41. ♚a1-a8+      ♚d7-c8  
42. ♖e4-c5      1-0

The end result was that Lasker not only managed to win a key encounter, but also to overtake his demoralised rival at the finish. It was the Second World Champion who was the first person to adopt a new weapon – deliberately upsetting the balance. Even the best chess players of the time would often go astray when the rhythm of play was sharply altered.



Emanuel Lasker

The following well-known example is a convincing illustration of that.

[C66]

Game 4

Siebert Tarrasch

Emanuel Lasker

Germany Wch-m 1908 (4)

1. e2-e4	e7-e5
2. ♖g1-f3	♖b8-c6
3. ♚f1-b5	♖g8-f6
4. 0-0	d7-d6

Typical of Lasker's approach to the opening. Avoiding forced variations (in this case based around 4...♖e4), he prefers to switch the focus of the struggle to the middlegame.

5. d2-d4	♚c8-d7
6. ♖b1-c3	♚f8-e7
7. ♚f1-e1	e5xd4
8. ♖f3xd4	♖c6xd4

It was also possible to play 8...0-0 as Lasker did in the second game of the match.

9. ♚d1xd4	♚d7xb5
10. ♖c3xb5	0-0
11. ♚c1-g5	h7-h6

**12. ♖g5-h4 ♜f8-e8**

A move 'based on general considerations', after which Black starts to experience some difficulties. The more concrete 12...c6 13.♘c3 ♜e8 14.♞ad1 ♚a5 would have led to balanced play.

**13. ♞a1-d1**

Preventing the possibility of ...c7-c6 and threatening 14.e5.

13. ... ♘f6-d7  
14. ♖h4xe7 ♜e8xe7  
15. ♚d4-c3!?



Preparing to transfer the knight to f5 via d4. White also had other possibilities of exploiting his slight space advantage:

A) 15.c4!? ♜e6 16.f4 a6 17.♘c3 ♘f6 18.♘d5 (18.e5!? ♚e8 19.♘d5) 18...♘xd5 19.exd5 (19.cxd5!) 19...♞e7 led to a draw in Capablanca-Marshall, New York (match game 4) 1909;

B) 15.f4!? a6 16.♘c3 ♘f6! 17.e5 ♚e8 also gives a perfectly defendable position.

**15. ... ♜e7-e5!**

The further course of the game should not be assessed solely in terms of pure chess criteria. The first (and absolutely correct!) impression is that White has a

small but stable edge. Consequently, Black has to defend accurately. The World Champion chooses exactly the opposite tactic: he drastically upsets the balance, striving to make the position extremely sharp. Of course, Lasker took into account the fact that this was precisely the course of events that would be most unpleasant for his opponent.

**16. ♘b5-d4**

16.♚xc7? ♜xb5 17.♚xd6 ♜xb2 18.♚xd7 ♚xd7 19.♞xd7 ♜c8 with a better endgame for Black.

**16. ... ♜e5-c5**

Continuing the tactic of rocking the boat.

**17. ♚c3-b3 ♘d7-b6  
18. f2-f4**

White had other means of applying pressure, for example 18.♘f5 or 18.♞e3, but Black's latest lunge provoked him into taking a more active approach. The move in the game, reducing the mobility of the ambitious rook, is perfectly logical, but it fundamentally alters the character of the position.

**18. ... ♚d8-f6  
19. ♚b3-f3 ♞a8-e8  
20. c2-c3 a7-a5!  
21. b2-b3**

Trying to limit the activity of the black pieces as far as possible. It looked more dangerous to play 21.♘b3! ♞b5 22.♚e2 ♜f5 (22...c6?! 23.♘d4 ♜c5 24.♚f2±) 23.g3 and Black's in a difficult situation, as the natural 23...a4 is met by the very unpleasant 24.e5! dxe5 25.♘d4!. Tarrasch, however, turned out to be unprepared for such a dramatic shift of register.

21. ... a5-a4  
22. b3-b4

The move in the game is far from bad, but it upsets the balance even more, and in dynamic positions full of tactical motifs Lasker was clearly superior to his opponent. After the stabilising 22.c4 the position would be much simpler for White to play.

22. ... ♖c5-c4  
23. g2-g3 ♖e8-d8



Preparing the ...c7-c5 counterblow, which wouldn't work immediately due to 24.♟b5.

24. ♖e1-e3?

A loss of concentration? Panic? Time trouble? Probably it was everything at once. White's last move is a serious mistake, although he had plenty of good options. The simplest move was 24.e5 dxe5 25.♖xe5 with a slight edge. It's tougher when low on time to evaluate the consequences of 24.♖d2!? c5? 25.bxc5 ♖xc5 (25...dxc5 26.e5 ♔g6 27.♟f5) 26.♖b2; or 24.a3 c5 25.bxc5 ♖xc5 (25...dxc5 26.♟b5) 26.♖b1. Those variations make it obvious that the ...c7-c5 advance wasn't much of a threat, but became a possibility due to the extremely unfortunate move in the game.

24. ... c7-c5  
25. ♟d4-b5?

Chasing the mirage of a combination. Tarrasch had completely lost control both of himself and the position, although objectively there was no need to panic. Equality could easily have been maintained with either 25.♟c2 cxb4 26.♟xb4 or 25.bxc5 ♖xc5 26.♖b1 ♟c4 27.♖d3.

25. ... c5xb4



26. ♖d1xd6?

The finishing touch on the self-destruction! After the calm 26.♖ed3! White could continue the struggle.

26. ... ♖d8xd6  
27. e4-e5 ♖c4xf4!

And there's the refutation, which was fairly obvious.

28. g3xf4 ♔f6-g6+  
29. ♟g1-h1

29.♟f2 ♖d2+ 30.♖e2 ♖xe2+ 31.♔xe2 ♟d5 was slightly better.

29. ... ♔g6-b1+  
30. ♟h1-g2 ♖d6-d2+

White's position is absolutely hopeless, and continuing the struggle can be explained by that same loss of a sense of reality.

- |             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| 31. ♖e3-e2  | ♚b1xa2  |
| 32. ♖e2xd2  | ♚a2xd2+ |
| 33. ♙g2-g3  | a4-a3   |
| 34. e5-e6   | ♚d2-e1+ |
| 35. ♙g3-g4  | ♚e1xe6+ |
| 36. f4-f5   | ♚e6-c4+ |
| 37. ♜b5-d4  | a3-a2   |
| 38. ♚f3-d1  | ♜b6-d5  |
| 39. ♚d1-a4  | ♜d5xc3  |
| 40. ♚a4-e8+ | ♙g8-h7  |
| 41. ♙g4-h5  | a2-a1♚  |
- 0-1

The provocative movement of the black rook seemed to make his opponent lose touch with reality. After a certain point Tarrasch had lost control of the situation and his moves lost their logic and coherence. That didn't happen all by itself, however – such a reaction was provoked by the unexpected but psychologically well-judged actions of his opponent.

Even back then it was the World Champions who determined the direction in which chess developed. Both Steinitz and Lasker were not only outstanding players, but also deep researchers. True, the first was interested, to put it simply, exclusively in the chess pieces and the methods and laws of their interaction. The second was drawn more to the philosophy of battle, the logic of the decisions taken directly by the players. Both, however, were among the first architects of the graceful and beautiful palace of modern chess.

Strangely enough, Capablanca's victory in his match against Lasker was in some ways a dead end from the point of view of chess development. In general, the appearance of an absolute genius often breaks the link between different periods and the continuity of traditions.

When we considered the components of success it was taken for granted that the greater the sum of individual favourable factors the greater the chances of success – in any case, theoretically speaking. But it's impossible to produce a breakdown of the Capa phenomenon. The new chess genius didn't have an exceptional memory, wasn't particularly hard-working and, according to his contemporaries, he didn't even keep a chess set at home (for younger readers it's perhaps worth noting that personal computers with chess databases and beautiful graphics didn't yet exist). He simply knew on which squares he had to put his pieces, and after that it seemed as though they interacted all by themselves. It was hard, if indeed it was possible at all, to learn something from him; all you could do was admire.

The game given below is also widely known. The remarkable thing about it is not even the ease with which the Cuban, playing White, solves problems at the board that his opponent had prepared for him at home. What's stunning is that Capablanca – by intuition alone – surpassed the analysis of the next few generations of chess players, and indeed had anticipated the conclusions of the best computer programs.

**[C89]**  
**Jose Raul Capablanca**  
**Frank James Marshall**

Game 5

New York 1918 (1)

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. e2-e4  | e7-e5  |
| 2. ♜g1-f3 | ♜b8-c6 |
| 3. ♙f1-b5 | a7-a6  |
| 4. ♙b5-a4 | ♜g8-f6 |
| 5. 0-0    | ♙f8-e7 |
| 6. ♚f1-e1 | b7-b5  |

7. ♖a4-b3 0-0

8. c2-c3

There are now many ways of avoiding the fearsome Marshall Attack, but at the time the move in the game was made almost automatically.

8. ... d7-d5!



One of the most famous positions in chess!

9. e4xd5 ♘f6xd5

10. ♘f3xe5 ♘c6xe5

11. ♜e1xe5 ♘d5-f6

Other knight retreats have also been tried: 11...♘b6 and even 11...♘f4, but ultimately each and every one of them was superseded by the modest move 11...c6, thanks to which the system with 8...d5 became long-lived.

12. ♜e5-e1 ♘e7-d6

13. h2-h3 ♘f6-g4!?

14. ♜d1-f3!

Capablanca had no need to calculate complex variations like 14.hxg4 ♜h4 15.♜f3 ♘h2+ 16.♘f1 ♘xg4 17.♜e4 ♘f4! 18.g3 ♜h2! with a decisive attack for Black. He simply sensed what researchers spent decades studying.

14. ... ♜d8-h4

15. d2-d4

Here the knight can't be taken either for the same reason: 15.hxg4 ♘h2+! 16.♘f1 ♘xg4 17.♜e4 ♘f4!.

15. ... ♘g4xf2



Grandmaster Shamkovich suggested the interesting idea of 15...h5!? but the prophylactic 16.♜e2! parries all the threats (16.♘d2 ♘h2+ 17.♘f1 ♘d6! leads only to a repetition of moves).

16. ♜e1-e2

Concerted efforts over many years led to the conclusion that it's stronger to play 16.♘d2! although here as well things aren't so simple. After 16...♘xh3! (all the other continuations are weaker) 17.gxh3 ♘xh3+ 18.♘f1! (18.♜g2 ♘g5 19.♘xg5 ♜xe1 favours Black) 18...♘g5! 19.♘xg5 (19.♜g2 ♘h3! is also unclear) 19...♜xg5 20.♘a3 c5 21.♜ad1 c4 22.♘c2 ♜ae8 Black has decent compensation for the piece. It's also not losing, it seems, to play the long-rejected 16.♜xf2!? ♘h2+ 17.♘f1 ♘g3 18.♜d2! (if 18.♜e2? ♘xh3 19.gxh3 ♜ae8 then White really is in trouble) 18...♘xh3 19.gxh3 ♜xh3+ 20.♜g2 ♜f5+ 21.♘g1 ♘xe1 22.♘d2. A totally unclear position.

16. ... ♘c8-g4

It doesn't seem as though the variation suggested by Kasparov in *My Great Predecessors*, 16...♖g4 17.g3! ♜xh3 18.♜xa8 ♙xg3 19.♜g2 ♜h4 20.♖d2, gives Black sufficient compensation for the rook. It's no longer as strong as it would be after 16.♙d2 to play 16...♙xh3 17.gxh3 ♖xh3+ 18.♙f1 as after 18...♖g5 19.♙xg5 ♜xg5 in comparison to the previous notes White's rook already stands on e2, and the consolidating 20.♖d2 is possible. Also insufficient is 18...♙f4 19.♙xf4 ♖xf4 20.♞e4 ♞ae8 21.♖d2!.

## 17. h3xg4

17.♜xf2? ♙g3 18.♜f1 ♙xe2 19.♜xe2 ♞ae8+.

17. ... ♙d6-h2+  
18. ♖g1-f1 ♙h2-g3

If 18...♖h1 then the MF suggests 19.♞e3! as the strongest move, although Capablanca's suggestion of 19.♙e3 is also perfectly playable.

19. ♞e2xf2	♜h4-h1+
20. ♖f1-e2	♙g3xf2
21. ♙c1-d2!	♙f2-h4
22. ♜f3-h3	♞a8-e8+
23. ♖e2-d3	♜h1-f1+
24. ♖d3-c2	♙h4-f2
25. ♜h3-f3!	♜f1-g1
26. ♙b3-d5!	c7-c5
27. d4xc5	♙f2xc5
28. b2-b4!	♙c5-d6
29. a2-a4	a6-a5
30. a4xb5	a5xb4
31. ♞a1-a6!	b4xc3
32. ♖b1xc3	♙d6-b4
33. b5-b6	♙b4xc3
34. ♙d2xc3	h7-h6
35. b6-b7	♞e8-e3



## 36. ♙d5xf7+! 1-0

One of the most memorable achievements of the Cuban genius. It's hard even for the meticulous MF, never mind all the many people who later investigated it, to criticise his play in this game. Which of the champions who followed would have been able to meet such a challenge so brilliantly!?

As mentioned before, the Third World Champion led chess away from the main road of development it had started to take. He had no need of a perfect knowledge of theory or psychological portraits of his opponents. His hand would faultlessly place the pieces on the necessary squares all by itself. Even when the moves he made weren't perfect they were usually perfectly sufficient – after all, Capa, in contrast to his opponents, almost never made serious mistakes! That explained his invincibility. If you did want to defeat the genius it was essential to raise your understanding of chess, and of yourself as a chess player, to a new level. Surpassing the Cuban in terms of talent was obviously impossible, so you had to seek out other resources. Despite the apparent infallibility it was possible to discover hidden flaws in his play. Capablanca instantly grasped the essence of a position, but he would

sometimes overlook concealed possibilities. The way he handled the opening wasn't distinguished by great depth and often came down to a primitive development of pieces. His aristocratic ease sometimes lacked depth. The main thing was that he was absolutely satisfied with his own play and with himself. It was completely alien to him to take a critical look at his own play. That brilliant superficiality had to be combatted with tireless and ruthless analysis; the utilitarian approach to the opening with deep investigative work; his life of ease with hours of work each day.

All that, multiplied by will-power, a boundless love of chess and... of yourself in chess, led to the appearance of a worthy opponent. The victory of Alexander Alekhine over Capablanca marked a new stage in the development of chess. Professional preparation for particular games and events as a whole became an integral and essential part of chess mastery. Moreover, chess for Alekhine – in contrast to Lasker and Capablanca – was the main substance of his life.

There was someone else, however, whose contribution to the development of chess is hard to overestimate. Tarrasch and Nimzowitsch introduced serious additions and improvements on the Steinitz principles of positional play, but opening theory itself – in the all-encompassing way we conceive it nowadays – was barely in its infancy. The key figure behind its construction was Akiba Rubinstein.

While Steinitz, Tarrasch and Nimzowitsch had tried to subjugate the chess pieces to the laws and rules they'd invented, Rubinstein modestly tried to grasp the essence of chess, the internal harmony of the pieces. He was essen-

tially the first 'pure' top-class chess player. Rubinstein didn't construct abstract theories, wasn't interested in the psychological aspects of the struggle, and was as far removed as it was possible to be from chess narcissism. He would painstakingly and persistently seek out chess truth, without striving for anything more. Long before the appearance of Fischer he actually followed the American's credo: 'I don't believe in psychology, I believe in strong moves'.



**Akiba Rubinstein**

Of course, it would be hard to call Rubinstein a scientist, although the methods of chess research are akin to those of science. You might instead compare him to a gold-miner, painstakingly sifting tons of ore for the sake of a single nugget. Fortune often favoured him during his searches, and a lot of his discoveries were far ahead of his time. It was Rubinstein who laid out the main paths for the development of many openings. Even half a century later in the match in Baguio, almost every game saw Kortchnoi use systems introduced into practice by Rubinstein. Nowadays his best achievements still look absolutely natural.



[D34]

**Akiba Rubinstein  
Siegbert Tarrasch**

Carlsbad 1923 (9)

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4  | d7-d5  |
| 2. c2-c4  | e7-e6  |
| 3. ♖b1-c3 | c7-c5  |
| 4. c4xd5  | e6xd5  |
| 5. ♗g1-f3 | ♞b8-c6 |
| 6. g2-g3! |        |



Rubinstein's brilliant opening invention, which still today is White's main weapon against the Tarrasch system.

- |              |        |
|--------------|--------|
| 6. ...       | ♞g8-f6 |
| 7. ♙f1-g2    | ♙f8-e7 |
| 8. 0-0       | 0-0    |
| 9. ♙c1-g5    | ♙c8-e6 |
| 10. d4xc5    | ♙e7xc5 |
| 11. ♗f3-e1!? |        |

By no means improvisation. Fifteen years earlier in this position Rubinstein had played 11. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 12. ♗xd5 ♙xb2 13. ♗c7 ♙ad8 14. ♙c1 ♙xc1 15. ♙axc1 ♙b6 16. ♗xe6 fxe6 17. ♙fd1 Rubinstein-Schlechter, Prague 1908. It's perhaps only White's last move that was a little insipid. Rubinstein didn't manage to win the game, and the whole plan appeared less than promising. However, it was shown that White's idea had much greater potential in the

Game 6

game Petrosian-Spassky, Moscow 1969. Spassky, it's true, played 15...b6, but he couldn't avoid difficulties.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 11. ...    | d5-d4  |
| 12. ♙g5xf6 | ♙d8xf6 |
| 13. ♗c3-e4 | ♙f6-e7 |
| 14. ♗e4xc5 | ♙e7xc5 |
| 15. ♗e1-d3 | ♙c5-b6 |



16. ♗d3-f4!

An absolutely modern pawn sacrifice!

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 16. ...    | ♙b6xb2 |
| 17. ♗f4xe6 | f7xe6  |
| 18. ♙a1-b1 | ♙b2xa2 |
| 19. ♙b1xb7 | ♙a2-a6 |
| 20. ♙d1-b3 | ♗c6-d8 |
| 21. ♙b7-d7 | ♙a8-c8 |
| 22. ♙b3-b2 |        |

White has more than enough compensation for the sacrificed pawn. Instead of the move in the game it also wasn't bad to play 22. ♙f3.

- |              |       |
|--------------|-------|
| 22. ...      | e6-e5 |
| 23. ♙f1-a1!? |       |

23. ♙d5+ ♗h8 24. ♙a1!. Now 24... ♙xe2 is bad because of 25. ♙a3! ♙e8 26. ♙e7!, and after 24... ♙f6 or 24... ♙xa1 White would increase his edge. 24.f4 is also reasonable.

- |         |        |
|---------|--------|
| 23. ... | ♙a6-f6 |
|---------|--------|

**24. e2-e3**

After 24.♔d5+ ♚h8 25.f3 there's a clever refutation: 25...d3! 26.exd3 ♘c6=.

**24. ... d4xe3**

The immediate 24...♘c6 was probably preferable, but it looks as though Black should hold the position however he likes. It seems Tarrasch held the same opinion.

- |                   |        |
|-------------------|--------|
| <b>25. f2xe3</b>  | ♘d8-c6 |
| <b>26. ♖b2-d2</b> | ♘c6-b8 |
| <b>27. ♜d7xa7</b> | ♜c8-d8 |
| <b>28. ♖d2-e2</b> | h7-h6  |
| <b>29. ♙g2-e4</b> | ♜d8-d7 |
| <b>30. ♜a7-a8</b> | ♜d7-d8 |
| <b>31. ♜a1-f1</b> | ♖f6-d6 |

31...♖xf1+ 32.♖xf1 ♜xf1+ 33.♚xf1 wouldn't have completely solved Black's problems, but with accurate play he should hold.

**32. ♜f1xf8+ ♜d8xf8****33. ♚g1-g2!**

An absolutely modern prophylactic move.

- |                   |         |
|-------------------|---------|
| <b>33. ...</b>    | ♖d6-b4  |
| <b>34. ♖e2-d3</b> | ♚g8-h8  |
| <b>35. ♜a8-a7</b> | ♖b4-b2+ |

- |                    |        |
|--------------------|--------|
| <b>36. ♙g2-h3</b>  | ♖b2-b6 |
| <b>37. ♜a7-a8</b>  | ♜f8-d8 |
| <b>38. ♖d3-c4</b>  | ♘b8-d7 |
| <b>39. ♖c4-c6!</b> | ♜d8xa8 |
| <b>40. ♖c6xa8+</b> | ♘d7-b8 |

After 40...♖b8 41.♖xb8+ ♘xb8 42.♚g4 White would win the e5-pawn.

- |                    |        |
|--------------------|--------|
| <b>41. ♖a8-d5</b>  | ♖b6-c7 |
| <b>42. ♙e4-f5!</b> | ♘b8-c6 |

Despite the limited material it's very hard for Black to defend. He's in almost complete zugzwang.

**43. ♖d5-c4 ♖c7-d6?**

The only means of continuing resistance was 43...♖b7!±.

- |                   |        |
|-------------------|--------|
| <b>44. ♖c4-f7</b> | ♖d6-d8 |
| <b>45. ♖f7-g6</b> | 1-0    |

If that game demonstrated the most effective system for counteracting the Tarrasch Defence, the next gifted the world one of the most popular variations in the history of chess.

**[D48]**  
**Ernst Grünfeld**  
**Akiba Rubinstein**

Game 7

Merano 1924 (3)

- |                  |               |
|------------------|---------------|
| <b>1. d2-d4</b>  | <b>d7-d5</b>  |
| <b>2. c2-c4</b>  | <b>e7-e6</b>  |
| <b>3. ♘b1-c3</b> | <b>c7-c6</b>  |
| <b>4. ♘g1-f3</b> | <b>♘g8-f6</b> |
| <b>5. e2-e3</b>  | <b>♘b8-d7</b> |
| <b>6. ♙f1-d3</b> | <b>d5xc4!</b> |

It was after this game that the variation began to be called the Meran. As with many other opening systems introduced into chess practice by Akiba Rubinstein, the 'Meran' became one of

the most popular theoretical variations for decades to come. It still hasn't lost its relevance today.

7. ♖d3xc4      b7-b5  
8. ♖c4-d3      a7-a6



One of the best-known positions in modern chess. The other main line of theory is 8...♗b7.

9. 0-0

Although this is sometimes also played today, the most principled continuation for White is 9.e4!. The extremely sharp positions arising after that move have been the subject of theoretical disputes at the very highest level, including in World Championship matches.

9. ...      c6-c5  
10. a2-a4      b5-b4  
11. ♖c3-e4      ♗c8-b7  
12. ♖e4-d2      ♗f8-e7  
13. ♖d1-e2      0-0  
14. ♖f1-d1

In his monograph on Akiba Rubinstein, the late Yury Razuvaev recommends 14.a5 here. That advice was followed by Kortchnoi against Nogueiras (Wijk aan Zee 1987), but although the game ultimately ended in a win for White, Kortchnoi himself wasn't sure about the strength of the move.

14. ...      a6-a5?!

The grandmasters mentioned above also disagree on the evaluation of this principled continuation. Razuvaev gave it an exclamation mark, but Kortchnoi considers the weakening of the b5-point to be a more significant factor. The double-edged character of the hard-to-judge positions that arise in this variation is one explanation for the Meran's inexhaustible popularity.

15. ♖d2-c4      ♖d8-c7



16. ♗c1-d2

This somewhat passive move was the cause of White's later difficulties. 16.b3, with the idea of fianchettoing the bishop, would weaken the c3-point, which Black could immediately exploit with 16...♖d5 or 16...♖e4. The most principled option in the position was the computer-like forcing 16.e4 cxd4 17.♖xd4 ♖c5 (17...♗xe4 18.♗xe4 ♖xe4 19.♖xe6 fxe6 20.♖xe4 ♖c5 21.♖g4 ♖f6 22.♗e3 also favours White) 18.♖b5 ♖c6 19.♖e5 ♖c8 20.♗e3! and after the pawn sacrifice is accepted White gets rich compensation in all lines. In this particular case it's the weakening of the b5-point that matters!

16. ...      ♖f8-d8

**17. ♖a1-c1 ♜c7-c6!**

The start of a subtle manoeuvre. The e4-square is simultaneously taken under control.

**18. b2-b3 ♜c6-d5**

**19. ♙d2-e1?!**

It was worth considering 19. ♜f1!? cxd4 20. ♘xd4 although Black is in no way obliged to take on d4.

**19. ... c5xd4!**

**20. e3xd4 ♜d8-c8!**

**21. ♙e1-d2 ♘f6-e4**

**22. ♜d1-e1 ♘e4-d6!?**

A flexible move, maintaining the tension. 22... ♘xd2 or 22... ♘c3 would have eased White's task.

**23. ♜e2-f1**

Again, passively played. It was worth considering 23. ♙f4 after which it's no good to play 23... ♘f5 due to 24. ♜d1! and if Black follows the same approach as in the game with 23... ♘xc4, then the white pieces will be much more actively placed.

**23. ... ♘d6xc4!**

**24. b3xc4**

24. ♙xc4 ♜xd4 favours Black.

**24. ... ♜d5-h5**

**25. ♘f3-e5?**

25. ♙e4 ♙xe4 26. ♜xe4 ♙f6 doesn't equalise, but it was worth considering 25. ♙e2.

**25. ... ♘d7xe5**

**26. ♜e1xe5 ♜h5-h4!**

**27. f2-f4?**

The lesser evil was 27. ♙e3 ♙d6 28. g3 ♜f6 29. ♜b5 ♙c6.

**27. ... ♙e7-f6**

**28. g2-g3**



**28. ... ♙f6xe5!**

This straightforward but spectacular tactical blow essentially ends the game.

**29. d4xe5 ♜h4-e7**

**30. ♙d2-e3 ♜e7-d7**

**31. ♙d3-e2 ♜d7xa4**

**32. g3-g4 b4-b3**

**33. ♘g1-f2 ♙b7-e4**

**34. ♙e3-d4 ♜c8-d8**

**35. ♘f2-e3 ♙e4-c2**

**36. ♜c1-a1 ♜a4-b4**

**0-1**

Rubinstein also contributed to the theory of the English Opening, which at the time wasn't very popular.

**[D06]**

**Akiba Rubinstein  
Siegbert Tarrasch**

Berlin 1928 (2)

Game 8

**1. c2-c4 c7-c5**

**2. ♘g1-f3 ♘g8-f6**

**3. d2-d4 c5xd4**

**4. ♘f3xd4 d7-d5**

**5. c4xd5 ♘f6xd5**

**6. e2-e4 ♘d5-f6**

**7. ♘b1-c3 e7-e5**



## 8. ♖d4-b5!?

'I haven't encountered this move either in theoretical research or in practical games, so it should be considered my novelty' – Rubinstein. It should be added that the inquisitive researcher didn't immediately arrive at this continuation. 8. ♖b5+ ♕d7 9. ♖f5!? (9. ♖f3!?) 9... ♖c6?! (Black has a problematic position after 9... ♖xb5 10. ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 11. ♖xb5 ♖xe4 12. ♖e3) 10. ♖d6+ ♖xd6 11. ♖xd6 ♗e7 12. ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 13. ♖e3 also occurred in the game Rubinstein-Mieses, St Petersburg 1909. Although White converted his opening edge back then, the Polish grandmaster continued to look for new paths.

## 8. ... ♔d8xd1+

An inaccuracy. 8...a6 9. ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 10. ♖a3 ♖e6 gives Black greater chances of equalising.

## 9. ♖e1xd1 ♖b8-a6

## 10. f2-f3!

Of course you'd like to prevent 10... ♖c5, but after 10. ♖e3 Black has clever counterplay: 10... ♖g4! 11. ♖xa7 ♗xa7 12. ♖xa7 ♖d7! (12... ♖xf2+? 13. ♖e1 ♖xh1 14. ♖xc8±) 13. ♖e1 ♖c5 14. ♖ab5 ♖b4 and despite the significant material deficit Black has good chances of equalising.

## 10. ... ♖f8-c5

## 11. ♖c3-a4 ♖c5-e7

An improvement on 11...0-0 in Rubinstein-Réti, Budapest 1926.

## 12. ♖c1-e3 ♖c8-d7

## 13. ♖a1-c1 0-0

## 14. a2-a3

Once more, useful prophylaxis.

## 14. ... ♖f8-d8

## 15. ♖d1-e1 ♖f6-e8

## 16. ♖f1-e2 ♖e8-d6

## 17. ♖a4-c3 ♖d6xb5

## 18. ♖c3xb5 b7-b6

## 19. b2-b4



'A knight on the rim is dim!' Did Rubinstein recall his opponent's famous maxim during the game? In any case, it's the miserable position of the a6-knight that guarantees White a decisive advantage.

## 19. ... ♖d7-e6

## 20. ♖e1-f2 ♖d8-d7

## 21. ♖h1-d1 ♖d7xd1

## 22. ♖c1xd1 ♖g8-f8

## 23. g2-g3 ♖f8-e8

## 24. f3-f4 f7-f6

## 25. f4xe5 f6xe5

## 26. ♖e3-c1! ♖e6-c8?!

This move emanates doom. However, the more active move 26... ♖b3 also

didn't alter the evaluation of the position.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 27. ♖c1-b2  | ♙e7-f6 |
| 28. ♜b5-d6+ | ♚e8-e7 |
| 29. ♜d6-c4! | ♚e7-e6 |



30. ♜c4xe5!

A little combination crowning White's positional gains.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 30. ...     | ♜a6-c7 |
| 31. ♙e2-c4+ | ♚e6-e7 |
| 32. ♜e5-c6+ | ♚e7-f8 |
| 33. ♙b2xf6  | g7xf6  |
| 34. ♜d1-d8+ | ♜c7-e8 |
| 35. b4-b5   | ♙c8-b7 |
| 36. ♜d8-d7  | ♙b7xc6 |
| 37. b5xc6   | 1-0    |

A superb game, and yet another example of opening foresight. In the second half of the twentieth century positions of that type achieved great popularity. Finally, one of Akiba Rubinstein's most modern handlings of the Nimzo-Indian Defence.

[E42]

**Akiba Rubinstein**

**Geza Maroczy**

Hamburg 1930 (1)

Game 9

- |          |        |
|----------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4 | ♜g8-f6 |
| 2. c2-c4 | e7-e6  |

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 3. ♜b1-c3 | ♙f8-b4 |
| 4. e2-e3  | c7-c5  |

After 4...0-0 White would also have responded 5. ♜e2. The system connected to developing the knight to e2 in the Nimzo-Indian Defence is one of Akiba Rubinstein's most remarkable conceptions. How far ahead of his time he was in his theoretical research is also indirectly confirmed by Alexander Alekhine's 'One of the least successful inventions of the opening artist Rubinstein'. And that was about a system adopted as a weapon by Botvinnik, Petrosian, Kortchnoi and Kasparov, never mind other twentieth-century grandmasters. Moreover, it wasn't long ago at all that the leader of the new generation, Magnus Carlsen, played this way against Adams (London 2009).

5. ♜g1-e2



5. ... c5xd4

Another modern theoretical tabiya would arise after 5...d5 6.a3 ♙xc3+ 7. ♜xc3 cxd4 8.exd4 dxc4 9. ♙xc4 ♜c6 10. ♙e3 0-0 11.0-0 b6 12. ♚d3 ♙b7 13. ♜ad1. Here the best move is 13...h6! (13...♜e7?! 14. ♙g5 ♜g6 15.f4! h6 16. ♙xf6 ♚xf6 17.f5 exf5 18. ♜xf5 with an edge for White, Botvinnik-Tolush, Moscow 1965) 14.f3 ♜e7 with a com-

## Modern Chess Preparation

plex strategic battle, Kortchnoi-Karpov, 5th match game Baguio Wch 1978.

- 6. e3xd4 d7-d5**  
**7. a2-a3**

In this version it's possible to play 7.c5 ♖e4 8.♗d2 ♜xd2 9.♔xd2 b6 (9...a5 10.a3 ♗xc3 11.♜xc3 ♗d7 12.♗d3 a4 13.0-0 0-0 14.f4 Kortchnoi-Karpov, 3rd match game Baguio Wch 1978) 10.a3 ♗xc3 11.♜xc3 bxc5 12.dxc5 Kasparov-Tal, Brussels 1987.

- 7. ... ♗b4-e7**  
**8. c4-c5 b7-b6**  
**9. b2-b4 b6xc5**

In modern tournament practice it's more common to encounter 9...0-0.

- 10. d4xc5 e6-e5!?**



Here as well it's more cautious to play 10...0-0, but Maroczy's desire to cast doubt on White's unusual flank operation is understandable.

- 11. f2-f4!**

Now the blow is landed from the other side!

- 11. ... d5-d4!**

Black accepts the challenge. Both after 11...e4 12.♜d4 and after 11...♜c6 12.fxe5! ♜xe5 13.♗f4 White's chances would be greater.

- 12. f4xe5 d4xc3**  
**13. ♔d1xd8+ ♗e8xd8!**

Black's on the top of his game! The obvious 13...♗xd8 14.exf6 ♗xf6 15.♗f4 was weaker.

- 14. e5xf6 ♗e7xf6**  
**15. ♗c1-e3**



- 15. ... ♜b8-c6?**

Maroczy doesn't withstand the tension after all. The unusual position demanded unconventional decisions: 15...c2! 16.♔c1 (16.♗d4 ♗g5! 17.♗xg7 ♗e8 18.♗b2 a5! 19.b5 ♜d7 would be even more dangerous for White) 16...♗e8! and the point of the 'strange' capture with the king on move 13 is revealed. 17.♜d2 ♜c6 18.♗xc2 ♗f5 19.♗c4 ♜c7 and Black has full compensation for the pawn.

- 16. 0-0-0+ ♗d8-c7**  
**17. ♗e3-f4+ ♜c7-b7**  
**18. g2-g3 ♗c8-f5**  
**19. ♗f1-g2?! ♗a8-e8!**

Not the strongest move. 19.b5! ♜a5 20.♗g2+ ♜c8 21.♗d5! ♗e8 22.♜d4 would have been the logical conclusion to the game.

- 19. ... ♗a8-e8!**  
**20. b4-b5?**

This natural move almost lets the win slip. Both 20.♘xc3 and 20.♞d6 maintained an edge for White.

20. ... ♞e8xe2  
 21. ♙g2xc6+ ♖b7-c8  
 22. ♞d1-d5



22. ... ♙f5-e6?

The decisive mistake. 22...♙e4! 23.b6 axb6 24.cxb6 ♜c2+! 25.♖d1 ♞b2 26.b7+ ♞xb7 27.♙xb7+ ♖xb7 28.♞d7+ ♖c6 29.♞c7+ ♖b6 guaranteed Black sufficient counterplay.

23. b5-b6 a7xb6  
 24. c5xb6 ♞e2-b2  
 25. ♞d5-a5 1-0

A short but fierce clash!

Rubinstein lacked the luck, character and health required to claim the World Championship title and become an acknowledged leader, but those were all qualities Alekhine had in abundance. He can perhaps be called the first chess professional in the modern understanding of the word. If we again return to the ‘gentlemanly’ selection of characteristics essential for the highest achievements, then you can call him one of the few universals among the great champions.

Alekhine was utterly devoted to chess, in contrast to his predecessors (Lasker, as we know, more than once over the course of his career retreated into mathematics and philosophy, leaving chess for years. Capablanca’s attitude to chess could even be described as amateur – he totally relied on his natural gift, not bothering with daily work). Alekhine’s memory can also be described as outstanding: he remembered not only all the games he played himself, but also a huge number played by his opponents. From his youth onwards he subordinated his whole life to a great goal – becoming World Champion – and achieved it, so there’s no need to talk about character. Lastly, he didn’t simply spend a lot of time on chess, he lived it, and up until a certain moment he had no reason to complain about his health. An ideal champion!

Victory in the titanic match against Capablanca marked a new stage in the development of the art of chess preparation.



Alexander Alekhine

In order to achieve his goal he needed, to a large extent, to subordinate his natural creative individuality to the demands of sporting expediency.



'For my victory over Capablanca I am indebted primarily to my superiority in the field of psychology. Capablanca played, relying almost exclusively on his rich intuitive talent. But for the chess struggle nowadays one needs a subtle knowledge of human nature, an understanding of the opponent's psychology. Previously people fought against pieces, while we also fight against our opponent – his will, nerves, individual characteristics and – last but not least – his vanity'. Lasker himself would willingly have signed off on this statement.

After beating his most powerful and dangerous opponent, Alekhine reigned unchallenged on the chess throne for many years.

The following games give an idea of his chess style and his overwhelming superiority over his contemporaries.

[E37]

Game 10

**Milan Vidmar**

**Alexander Alekhine**

San Remo 1930 (4)

- |           |         |
|-----------|---------|
| 1. d2-d4  | ♘g8-f6  |
| 2. c2-c4  | e7-e6   |
| 3. ♖b1-c3 | ♙f8-b4  |
| 4. ♔d1-c2 | d7-d5   |
| 5. a2-a3  | ♙b4xc3+ |
| 6. ♔c2xc3 | ♘f6-e4  |
| 7. ♔c3-c2 |         |



7. ...

♘b8-c6

An approach to the opening typical of Alekhine – the most rapid piece development, sometimes even at the cost of static positional factors. His note to this move is also extremely interesting: 'As this idea only occurred to me in this game and I've never tried it since it wouldn't surprise me at all if subsequent detailed analysis clearly proves the inadequacy of this defensive system'. In other words, what was important for the World Champion was victory in the given game, while he graciously allowed everyone else to busy themselves with the painstaking search for truth. A striking contrast to Rubinstein's approach to chess!

8. e2-e3

e6-e5



9. f2-f3!

Alekhine gave this a question mark. The main line at the time and for many years afterwards was considered to be 9.cxd5 ♔xd5 10.♙c4 ♔a5+ 11.b4 ♘xb4 12.♔xe4 ♘c2+ 13.♙e2 ♔e1+ 14.♙f3 ♘xa1 15.♙b2 0-0! (Alekhine looked at 15...♙e6 16.d5 0-0-0 17.dxe6±) 16.♙g3 ♙d7!? 17.♘f3 ♔xh1 18.♘g5 g6 19.♔xe5 ♔ae8 (the MF points out the option of 19...♔d1!? 20.h3 ♙xh3!=) 20.♔f6 ♔xe3+ 21.fxe3 ♔e1+ 22.♙f3 ♔d1+ when:

A) 23. ♖e2! ♔b1 (23... ♖g4+ 24. ♘f4! ♔c2 25. d5 ♔f5+ 25. ♔xf5 ♖xf5 26. ♖xa1 and Black's a very long way from a draw;

B) 23. ♖g3 with a draw eventually, Sadler-Tukmakov, Linares Open 1995, although both players missed a chance for more.

### 9. ... ♖e4-f6

9... ♔h4+ 10. g3 ♖xg3 11. ♔f2 ♖f5 12. cxd5±.

### 10. c4xd5?!

The World Champion thought this move was forced, but not long ago the whole variation underwent a fundamental re-evaluation due to 10. dxe5! ♖xe5 11. cxd5 ♔xd5 12. e4. In all the games in which this position has been encountered Black has experienced serious problems.

### 10. ... ♔d8xd5 11. ♖f1-c4 ♔d5-d6



### 12. d4xe5?!

Better is 12. ♖e2! exd4 13. exd4! (13. ♖b5?! 0-0 14. ♖xc6? d3 was seen in the game L. Grigorian-Maslov, Tashkent 1974) 13... ♖xd4 14. ♖xd4 ♔xd4 15. ♔e2+ ♖e6 16. ♖xe6 fxe6 17. ♔xe6+ ♖f8 18. ♖e3 ♔d5 with equality.

### 12. ... ♖c6xe5 13. ♖c1-d2

White was already experiencing certain difficulties: 13. ♖e2?! ♖e6! 14. ♖xe6 ♖d3+ 15. ♖f1 fxe6. The best move, relatively speaking, was 13. ♖e2 0-0 14. e4.

### 13. ... 0-0 14. ♖d2-b4 c7-c5 15. ♖a1-d1 ♔d6-c6 16. ♖b4-d2 ♖c8-f5!?

This looks very tempting, but the straightforward 16... ♖xc4! 17. ♔xc4 ♖e6 18. ♔c3 ♔b5 is also good.

### 17. ♔c2xf5 ♖e5xc4 18. ♖d2-c1 ♖f8-e8 19. ♖e1-f2 ♖e8-e6

The difficulty in playing such positions is choice. There are many tempting lines, and it's not so easy to pick the best. 19... ♖e5 20. ♖e2 c4 was another possibility.

### 20. ♖g1-h3 ♖f6-e4+! 21. ♖f2-e1 ♖e4-d6 22. ♔f5-d3



### 22. ... ♖c4xe3!?

Once again, the best is the enemy of the good. It was possible to keep upping the pressure with 22... ♖ae8.

23. ♙c1xe3      c5-c4  
24. ♖d3-d5      ♜e6xe3+  
25. ♙e1-f2      ♖c6xd5  
26. ♜d1xd5      ♜e3-d3!

As a result of this forced operation Black has won a pawn, but the position has become extremely simplified. Alekhine finds the best chance. 26...♖e6 27.♗hd1 ♜e8 28.♞d7 ♜b6 29.♞1d2 promised even less chance of success.

27. ♖d5xd3      ♜c4xd3  
28. ♖h1-d1      ♜d6-c4  
29. ♖d1xd3      ♜c4xb2  
30. ♖d3-b3      ♜b2-c4  
31. ♖b3xb7      ♜c4xa3  
32. ♜h3-g5

With counterplay which should have been sufficient for a draw.

- |     |        |        |
|-----|--------|--------|
| 32. | ...    | a7-a5  |
| 33. | ♘g5xf7 | a5-a4  |
| 34. | ♘f7-d6 | ♘a3-c2 |
| 35. | ♞b7-b2 | a4-a3  |
| 36. | ♞b2xc2 | a3-a2  |
| 37. | ♞c2xa2 |        |

37.♙c1! a1♚ 38.♖xa1 ♜xa1 39.g4 was more accurate.

37. ... ♖a8xa2+  
38. ♔f2-g3 ♕g8-f8  
39. h2-h4 ♕f8-e7  
40. ♘d6-e4



As a result of inventive play Black has won the exchange, but at the same time he's been forced to exchange almost all the pieces. It's hard to imagine White losing this position, but detailed end-game analysis isn't one of our aims. In any case, Black deserved a win more than White deserved a draw.

40. ... h7-h6  
41. ♖e4-f2 ♔e7-e6  
42. ♖f2-d3

The knight was occupying a wonderful position on e4, so there was no need to alter its post.

42. ... ♔e6-f5  
43. ♘d3-f4 ♙a2-a4  
44. ♘f4-d3 ♙a4-c4  
45. ♘d3-f2 ♚c4-c6  
46. ♘f2-h3 ♙f5-e5  
47. h4-h5?



Pseudo-activity – it wasn't worth letting the pawn become separated.

47. ... ♖c6-c2  
48. ♘h3-f4 ♗c2-d2  
49. ♘f4-h3 ♙e5-d4  
50. ♘h3-f4 ♙d4-e3  
51. ♘f4-e6 ♖d2-d5  
52. f3-f4 ♖d5-f5  
53. ♙g3-g4 ♖f5-f6  
54. f4-f5 ♖f6-f7

55. g2-g3      ♖e3-e4  
 56. ♘e6-c5+    ♖e4-d4  
 57. ♘c5-b3+    ♖d4-e5  
 0-1

The following example is even more dramatic.

[C15]

Game 11

**Alexander Alekhine**  
**Aaron Nimzowitsch**

Bled 1931 (6)

1. e2-e4      e7-e6  
 2. d2-d4      d7-d5  
 3. ♘b1-c3    ♙f8-b4  
 4. ♘g1-e2

Alekhine comments: 'An absolutely innocuous move. I chose it, however, as I knew that in a similar situation Nimzowitsch had previously displayed excessive greed and hadn't received the due punishment.'

4. ...      d5xe4  
 5. a2-a3    ♙b4xc3+  
 6. ♘e2xc3   f7-f5?!



And here's the vaunted 'greed' that Alekhine talked about. The natural 6...♘c6 would have led to approximate equality.

7. f2-f3!

7. ♙f4!? ♘f6 8.f3 0-0 (8...exf3 9.♖xf3 ♖xd4? 10.♘b5+- Alekhine) 9.fxe4 ♘xe4 10.♘xe4 fxe4 11.♖d2 ♘d7 occurred in the game mentioned above, Thomas-Nimzowitsch, Marienbad 1925. Black has good play.

7. ...      e4xf3  
 8. ♖d1xf3    ♖d8xd4

It was possible to take the pawn in another manner: 8...♖h4+ 9.g3 ♖xd4, after which White has a pleasant choice between 10.♘b5 and 10.♙f4.

9. ♖f3-g3!

A less than obvious resource which wouldn't have been there after 8...♖h4, while after 9.♘b5!? Black would have kept the option of 9...♖h4+ (9...♖e5+!? 10.♙e2 ♘a6 is another defence) 10.g3 ♖e7.

9. ...      ♘g8-f6!

The most active continuation. Other moves lead to worse play for Black: 9...♘c6 10.♘b5 ♖e4+ 11.♙e3!; 9...♘e7 10.♙e3! ♖f6 11.0-0-0!.

10. ♖g3xg7



10. ...      ♖d4-e5+!

Alekhine considered this to be the losing move, claiming it was better to play 10...♗g8! 11.♖xc7 ♘c6. The position

really is unclear, even after the best move 12.♔f4! (12.♖b5?! ♚h4+ 13.g3 ♚e4+ 14.♗f2 ♚xc2+ 15.♗g1 ♖e4; also unpromising is 12.♔d2!? ♖e4! 13.0-0-0 ♗g7 14.♚f4 ♖f2 15.♚xd4 ♖xd4 16.♔e3 ♖xd1 17.♔xd4 ♗d7 18.♔b5 ♖xc3=) 12...♖e4! – in this case Nimzowitsch's 'greed' would have been fully justified.

It's simply that in sharp, irrational positions like this one Alekhine was head and shoulders above his contemporaries.

### 11. ♔f1-e2 ♖h8-g8

11...♖g4 12.♚xe5 ♖xe5 13.♔f4± is worse.

### 12. ♚g7-h6 ♗g8-g6

12...♗xg2? 13.♔g5! ♖bd7 14.0-0-0 would lead to a rapid collapse.

### 13. ♚h6-h4 ♔c8-d7!?

Losing was 13...♗xg2? 14.♔f4+- ♗xe2+ 15.♖xe2 ♚xb2 16.♗d1 ♖bd7 17.♗g1 but 13...♗g4!? 14.♚h3 (after 14.♚f2 ♖e4! (14...♖c6?! 15.0-0 ♗g7 16.♗e1!) 15.♖xe4 ♗xe4 the position is also unclear) 14...♖c6 15.0-0 ♗g6 was a possible alternative.

### 14. ♔c1-g5!



### 14. ... ♔d7-c6?

Remarkable optimism! Black's intending to develop the b8-knight to d7 to defend everything, but there was no longer time for comfortable development. He should have played 14...♖c6! with a perfectly defensible position. For example: 15.0-0-0 0-0-0 16.♔h5 (16.♗he1 h6 17.♔xh6 ♖g4! 18.♔xg4 ♗xg4? 19.♚xg4 fxg4 20.♗xe5 ♖xe5=) 16...♖xh5! 17.♔xd8 ♚f4+ 18.♖b1 ♚xh4 19.♔xh4 ♗xg2 20.♗hg1 ♗g6 and Black is no worse.

### 15. 0-0-0

After this natural move Black's position rapidly falls apart.

### 15. ... ♔c6xg2

There was no escape after 15...♖bd7 16.♗he1+- ♔e4 (16...0-0-0 17.♔h5 ♗xg5 18.♗xe5 ♗xh5 19.♚d4) 17.♔h5 (17.♔f3!?) 17...♖xh5 18.♚xh5 ♖f6 19.♔xf6 ♚xf6 20.♖xe4 fxe4 21.♚b5+! winning.

### 16. ♗h1-e1 ♔g2-e4

### 17. ♔e2-h5! ♖f6xh5

### 18. ♗d1-d8+ ♔e8-f7

### 19. ♚h4xh5 1-0

19...♗g7 20.♖xe4 fxe4 21.♔h6+ is lethal.

The course of that game should have served as a warning to the World Champion. Risky, but psychologically well-judged actions at the very beginning, confident and bold play coming out of the opening, but then a difficult-to-explain error.

Euwe's lack of confidence prevented him from taking advantage of the chance he was given in the next game, but it was a signal that went unnoticed. Clearly Alekhine had decided that his

opponent was demoralised and the fate of the match was decided. The Dutchman, however, continued to battle on as if nothing had happened. The World Champion turned out to be mentally unprepared for serious resistance. After his very first setbacks something went awry for Alekhine and he started to make strange mistakes.

[C15]

Game 12

**Alexander Alekhine**

**Max Euwe**

Netherlands Wch-m 1935 (7)

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. e2-e4  | e7-e6  |
| 2. d2-d4  | d7-d5  |
| 3. ♖b1-c3 | ♙f8-b4 |
| 4. ♗g1-e2 | d5xe4  |
| 5. a2-a3  | ♙b4-e7 |
| 6. ♖c3xe4 | ♘b8-c6 |



**7. g2-g4?!**

One of the most shocking moves ever played at such a high level! How, in general, could such an idea have been conceived? Let's try to get to the bottom of it. In the 5th game of the match Alekhine had played the 'normal' 7.♙e3 ♗f6 8.♗2c3 0-0 9.♗g3 b6 10.♙e2 ♙b7 11.0-0 but got nothing out of the opening. The more extravagant 7.f4 ♗f6 8.♙d3 ♗xe4 9.♙xe4 ♙d5! also gives nothing. It doesn't look

bad to play 7.g3 but then 7...e5 8.d5 ♗d4 9.♗2c3 (9.♗xd4 ♙xd5 10.♙g2 ♙xd4 11.♙xd4! exd4 12.♙f4 with sufficient compensation for the pawn, is probably stronger) 9...f5 and everything's fine for Black. It might be in this connection that the idea arose of taking control of the f5-square in advance. Perhaps, however, the origin of such a provocative move isn't entirely in the realm of chess, but instead lies in Alekhine's successful start to the match and the excessive self-confidence that gave him.

**7. ...**

**b7-b6?!**

Euwe reacts in the same way he did in the fifth game – in general, the decision-making of the Dutch Champion was somewhat stereotyped – perhaps Alekhine had taken into account that feature of his opponent's play. 7...e5!? 8.d5 ♗d4! 9.♗2c3!? (9.♗xd4!? ♙xd5 10.♙g2 ♙xd4 11.♙e2 with some compensation for the pawn was also a possibility) 9...♗f6 10.♗xf6+ ♙xf6 11.♙g2 h5 wasn't bad at all, but simpler was 7...♗f6! 8.♗xf6+ ♙xf6 9.♙e3 h5! 10.gxh5 ♙d5 with excellent play for Black.

**8. ♙f1-g2**

**♙c8-b7**

**9. c2-c3**

**♗g8-f6**

**10. ♗e2-g3**

**0-0!?**

This isn't actually a bad decision, although many commentators also criticised this move. It was more cautious to hide the king on the other side: 10...♙d7!? 11.h4 (11.g5 ♗xe4 12.♗xe4 0-0-0= Alekhine) 11...0-0-0.

**11. g4-g5**

Again the most energetic (and risky) continuation. True, the calm 11.♗xf6+ ♙xf6 12.0-0 only promised equality.

11. ... ♖f6xe4  
12. ♖g3xe4 ♜g8-h8

Preparing ...f7-f5. It was better, however, to attack the centre in a different manner: 12...e5! 13.♗e3 (13.d5?! ♗a5 14.h4 ♜d7) 13...exd4 14.cxd4 ♗a5 and Black is fine.

13. ♜d1-h5! ♜d8-e8?!



Remaining consistent. Here as well, however, 13...e5! 14.dxe5 ♗xe5 15.0-0 ♜d5 was the best option.

14. ♗e4-f6!

Black had probably overlooked this blow!

14. ... ♗e7xf6

Worse is 14...gxf6?! 15.gxf6 ♗a5 (15...♗xf6 16.♗e4+-) 16.♗xb7 ♗xb7 17.♜f3! (MF) 17...♗a5 18.fxe7 ♜xe7 19.♗h6 ♜g8 20.0-0-0 with an edge for White.

15. g5xf6 g7xf6  
16. ♜h5-h4 ♜e8-d8

16...♜e7? 17.♗e4+-.

17. ♗c1-f4! e6-e5  
18. ♗f4-g3 f6-f5!?  
19. d4xe5

At this point it's already possible to sum up White's opening experiment: it

proved to be fully justified. The ensuing position is clearly in his favour. The subsequent adventures of this game are beyond the scope of our topic, so the rest of the game is given with only short notes.

19. ... ♜f8-g8!?



20. ♗g2-f3?

From a wide range of possible continuations White chooses the most unfortunate: 20.♜xd8!?!; 20.♜h5!?!; 20.♜h3!?!; the MF prefers the 'inhuman' 20.♜g1.

20. ... ♜d8-d3!

An excellent resource which wasn't, however, fully exploited.

21. ♗f3-e2 ♜d3-e4?

After the best 21...♜c2! it would be White who had to try and hold.

22. ♜h4xe4 f5xe4  
23. ♗g3-h4!?

Even stronger was 23.0-0-0!.

23. ... h7-h6

23...♗g7!.

24. 0-0-0 ♜a8-e8  
25. ♗h4-f6+ ♗h8-h7  
26. f2-f4!+- e4xf3  
27. ♗e2xf3! ♗c6-a5

28. ♖f3xb7	♟a5xb7
29. ♜d1-d7	♟b7-c5
30. ♜d7xf7+	♞h7-g6
31. ♜f7xc7	♟c5-d3+
32. ♞c1-b1	♞g6-f5
33. ♜h1-d1	♟d3xe5
34. ♜d1-f1+	♞f5-e4
35. ♜c7xa7	♟e5-c4
36. ♜a7-d7	♞e4-e3
37. ♜f1-e1+	♞e3-f3
38. ♜e1xe8	♜g8xe8
39. ♜d7-d4	♟c4-e3
40. ♜d4-h4	1-0

Those fragments alone are enough to form an impression of the chess portrait of the Fourth World Champion – a brilliant chess player with limitless imagination and a superb ability to calculate variations! It's hard to argue with that description, which was already common among his contemporaries. Another cliché, that Alekhine had encyclopaedic knowledge and was a tireless opening researcher, is more easily disputed.

Alekhine really was capable of playing almost any opening, but at the same time he didn't have Rubinstein's depth and thoroughness. His main goal was to surprise and shock his opponent, to tempt him onto unfamiliar territory, even at the cost of a certain extravagance and risk. What Alekhine couldn't allow himself in his confrontation with Capablanca, he gave free rein to against opponents he held in lower regard.

Perhaps he also lacked the opening intuition inherent to natural-born researchers. Sometimes he had a sceptical evaluation of variations that have stood the test of time, while on other occasions he was distracted by clearly unsound ideas. In general, reading

Alekhine's notes on the opening stage you're often amazed by their banality and lack of insight. It's sufficient to quote some of his statements.

'1.e4 e5 2.♟f3 ♟c6 3.♞b5? g6 – Almost any reply is good after White's 3rd move'. '1.d4 d5 2.♟f3 ♟f6 3.c4 c6 4.♟c3 e6 – An inaccuracy, as in the Orthodox Defence the move ...c7-c6 isn't always useful...' '1.d4 ♟f6 2.c4 e6 3.♟f3 d5 4.♟c3 ♞b4 – Although, strictly speaking, this defence isn't entirely correct it isn't easy to refute. I chose it exclusively in order to test out the practical chances which arise if White plays inaccurately, and the danger it represents if White plays correctly.' 'This move (6.♞g5 – Tukmakov) along with 6.♞f4 enjoyed great popularity in the first years of the Tarrasch Defence, but they were almost entirely squeezed out of practice by Schlechter's 6.g3 (Prague 1908). I chose this move exclusively for variety, striving as far as possible to pose my opponent new – or completely forgotten – opening puzzles'. One more memorable quote: 'I consider the choice of this move (1...c5 after 1.d4 in the game against Bogoljubow in the 1934 match), which after the game gained a certain popularity, one of my chess sins. Even if the World Champion is also a man and sometimes can't resist bad opening moves, he should, at the very least, avoid moves that he himself doesn't consider to be entirely satisfactory'.

While Rubinstein's moves spoke eloquently on his behalf, Alekhine often supplemented or even replaced them with words. In my view, Fischer's opinion was somewhat closer to the truth: 'Many consider Alekhine a great opening theoretician but, in my view, he



played 'book' variations, not knowing them in any great detail and with the sacred belief that thanks to his native talent he'd be able to wriggle out of any scrape'.

To sum up this short survey, it can be said that for Alekhine the opening meant the same as it means for the Canadian ice-hockey players to hit the puck into their opponent's zone. The main thing was to switch play closer to your opponents' goal, and when applied to chess – to the king. The Russian genius was in his element in the middlegame, particularly in unbalanced positions where dynamic factors prevail. In such positions he was head and shoulders above his contemporaries. Meticulous research and carefully worked out schemes were never Alekhine's thing – in that he was, like the rest of his contemporaries, significantly inferior to Rubinstein. But no-one else at the time devoted as much attention as he did to the psychology of opening preparation – there no-one could match him.

The World Champion's fantastic tournament successes in San Remo, Bled and Zurich, and his convincing match wins against Bogoljubow, confirmed Alekhine's dominance. Moreover, there didn't seem to be a challenger on the horizon capable of putting up strong resistance, if you don't count his old arch-rival Capablanca, who Alekhine carefully avoided. Therefore his defeat to Max Euwe and the loss of the title turned out to be almost as great a shock for the chess world as it was for Alekhine himself.

So what happened? How did a modest school teacher from Amsterdam man-

age to end up on the same footing as the legendary champions?

Alekhine's two matches against Euwe were milestones in terms of improvements in the art of preparation and therefore it makes sense to dwell on them. Euwe's significance in chess history certainly can't be compared to that of his great predecessors, but in terms of our topic he was in many ways a symbolic figure. After all, he beat one of the greatest chess players of all time while Alekhine was still in his prime. Whatever chess historians say about a



**Max Euwe**

decline in the champion's play that wasn't the case – the achievements already mentioned above provide convincing proof.

Alekhine's notorious drinking also isn't a factor. There's a widespread opinion that Alekhine lost the 1935 match because he drank, and won the return match because he sobered up. In my view, however, Alekhine didn't lose in 1935 because he drank but, on the contrary, he only seriously turned to drinking when he sensed that the match had taken an unexpected turn; he wasn't

capable of handling the stress by other means.

So what enabled the Dutchman to win, despite his not being an outstandingly talented chess player or an indisputable contender for the World Championship? First and foremost, it was his deep and comprehensive preparation for the match, which took him a whole year and a half – chess had never known anything like it before. All his opponent's games, including the opening preferences and weaknesses, were subjected to a scrupulous analysis. Euwe didn't have the World Champion's vivid imagination and didn't produce the same quantity of unexpected and paradoxical ideas, but his preparation was more fundamental and thorough. It wasn't in the Dutchman's nature to rely on inspiration, but he was always up-to-date on the latest research and carefully checked and supplemented existing analysis. Another factor in his success was the psychological situation: in the eyes both of public opinion (even that of his patriotically-inclined compatriots) and specialists he was the clear outsider. Euwe also didn't overestimate his own powers, and saw his main task as follows: to demonstrate decent play and lose by a respectable margin. He hadn't won qualifying events or demonstrated his right to play by winning a battle against his rivals, and his self-awareness of that was aided by the Dutchman's natural modesty.

So his inner state was one of total liberation, while at the same time he was fully focussed and composed – ideal fighting shape. So the unsuccessful start to the match didn't knock him off track at all. Alekhine, on the other hand, who in any case had no doubts he'd succeed,

only became more self-confident after the successful start.

[D97]

**Max Euwe**

**Alexander Alekhine**

Game 13

Netherlands Wch-m 1935 (12)

- |    |              |              |
|----|--------------|--------------|
| 1. | <b>d2-d4</b> | g8-f6        |
| 2. | <b>c2-c4</b> | <b>g7-g6</b> |
| 3. | b1-c3        | <b>d7-d5</b> |
| 4. | d1-b3        | <b>d5xc4</b> |
| 5. | b3xc4        | f8-g7        |
| 6. | <b>e2-e4</b> | <b>0-0</b>   |
| 7. | g1-f3        | <b>a7-a6</b> |
| 8. | c1-f4        |              |



It seems Black's previous move was an improvisation, but a brilliant one, as became clear many years later. White's reaction to the surprise was perfectly logical and sensible – developing another piece with tempo. At the start of the 1970s the system with 7...a6 became extremely popular due to the ideas of Hungarian chess players. It was a sharp plan that initially came to the fore: 8.e5 b5 9.♖b3 ♘fd7 10.e6 or 10.h4, but Carlsen recently introduced 10.♘g5 into practice. Another, calmer line is based on 8.♙e2. Also of interest is the last word in fashion – 8.♚a4.

8. ...

**b7-b5!**

The half-hearted 8...c6 wouldn't be in Alekhine's style at all.

**9. ♖c4xc7**



**9. ... ♖d8-e8?**

The evaluation of this whole variation was fundamentally altered by 9...♖xc7! 10.♙xc7 ♙b7! (stronger than 10...b4 11.♘a4 ♙b7) 11.e5 (also tried was 11.♙d3 b4 12.♘a4 ♘xe4 13.0-0 ♘f6 14.♙ac1 ♘bd7 15.♘e5 ♙fc8 16.♙fe1 e6= Leko-Anand, Miskolc rapid 2009) 11...♘d5:

A) White's initial response wasn't the best: 12.♙a5 ♘f4! 13.0-0-0? (13.a4 ♘c6 14.♙b6 should have been preferred) 13...♘h3! with better play for Black, Balashov-Barczay, Skopje 1970;

B) 12.♘xd5 ♙xd5 13.♙e2 ♙c8. Practice has shown that Black has no problems at all. Keeping queens on the board, on the other hand, leads to an advantage for White.

**10. ♙f1-e2 ♘b8-c6**

No better was 10...b4 11.♘d5 ♘xd5 12.exd5 and Black has to exchange queens under significantly worse terms.

**11. d4-d5 ♘c6-b4?!**

The last chance to somehow complicate play was 11...e5.

**12. 0-0 ♘f6xe4**

Unfortunately for Black there's no longer anything better.

**13. ♘c3xe4 ♘b4xd5**

**14. ♖c7-c1 ♙c8-f5**

If you gave Black a pawn, let's say on c4, then the outcome of the battle would be absolutely unclear, but without it the compensation for the piece is clearly insufficient.

**15. ♘e4-g3 ♙a8-c8**

**16. ♖c1-d2 ♘d5xf4**

**17. ♖d2xf4 ♙f5-c2**

17...♙xb2 18.♘xf5 ♙xa1 19.♖h6 gxf5 20.♘g5 loses by force.

**18. ♖f4-b4 ♖e8-d8**

**19. ♘f3-e1! ♙c2-a4**

**20. ♙a1-b1! ♙g7-d4**



**21. ♘e1-f3!**

Not giving his opponent the slightest chance. 21.b3 a5 22.♖a3 ♙c5 23.♖c1 ♙xf2+.

**21. ... ♙d4-c5**

**22. ♖b4-h4 ♙a4-c2**

**23. ♙b1-c1 f7-f6**

**24. ♙e2-c4+! b5xc4**

Here you could already lower the curtain with a clear conscience.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 25. ♖h4xc4+ | ♔g8-g7 |
| 26. ♜c4xc2  | ♜d8-a5 |
| 27. ♜c2-e2  | e7-e5  |
| 28. a2-a3   | ♙c5-e7 |
| 29. ♘f3-d4  | ♞c8xc1 |
| 30. ♞f1xc1  | ♔g7-h8 |
| 31. ♘d4-c6  | ♜a5-c7 |
| 32. ♜e2xa6  | ♞f8-c8 |
| 33. ♘g3-f1  | ♞c8-b8 |
| 34. ♘c6xe7  | ♜c7xe7 |
| 35. ♞c1-c8+ | ♞b8xc8 |
| 36. ♜a6xc8+ | 1-0    |

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 9. d4xe5   | ♘d7xe5 |
| 10. ♙c1-f4 | ♘f6-d7 |
| 11. ♙f1-g2 | f7-f6  |

11...♙e6 12.♘xe5 ♘xe5 13.0-0 ♙e7?!  
 14.♜c2 ♞d8 15.♞fd1 occurred in the first game of the match, with Alekhine playing White. The opening of that encounter didn't go in Euwe's favour, but the Dutchman had obviously worked hard on this position as he totally outplayed his opponent not only in this game, but also in the next – with the opposite colour.

For the shocking 11...g5!?, which has become Black's main weapon nowadays, there was a mere 60+ years to wait!

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 12. 0-0    | ♞a8-d8 |
| 13. ♜d1-c1 |        |



- |         |          |
|---------|----------|
| 13. ... | ♜c7-b8?! |
|---------|----------|

The automatic 13...♙e7? would be followed by 14.♘xe5 ♘xe5 15.♘d5, gaining the advantage of the two bishops. Alekhine, however, chooses the wrong defence to that threat. The correct path was 13...♙e6 – as demonstrated by Euwe in the next game.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 14. ♘c3-e4 | ♙f8-e7 |
| 15. ♜c1-c3 | 0-0    |
| 16. ♞a1-d1 | ♙f5-e6 |

The challenger had found it much easier to deal with the stresses of inevitable setbacks, and the positive turn of events in the match also didn't affect his composure. The Dutchman's success was largely down to his wonderful physical condition. Euwe was perhaps the first chess player to grasp the importance of that previously underestimated factor, and in that regard he was head and shoulders above his great opponent. The turning-point in the match came when, after winning a good game in a topical variation of the Slav Defence, Euwe won the next game no less convincingly – with the opposite colour.

[D17]

Game 14

Max Euwe

Alexander Alekhine

Netherlands Wch-m 1935 (20)

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4  | d7-d5  |
| 2. c2-c4  | c7-c6  |
| 3. ♘g1-f3 | ♘g8-f6 |
| 4. ♘b1-c3 | d5xc4  |
| 5. a2-a4  | ♙c8-f5 |
| 6. ♘f3-e5 | ♘b8-d7 |
| 7. ♘e5xc4 | ♜d8-c7 |
| 8. g2-g3  | e7-e5  |



### 17. ♖c4xe5

Despite the opinion not just of Euwe, but also of many subsequent commentators, the combination 17. ♖xd7!? ♜xd7 18. ♖xe5 fxe5 19. ♙xe5 leads to an edge for White: 19... ♙b4! 20. ♙xb8 ♙xc3 21. ♖c5! (worse is 21. ♙d6 ♜e8 22. bxc3 ♙f5 23. ♖c5 ♜xd6 24. ♖xb7 ♜d2) 21... ♙xb2 22. ♙f4! (Kasparov indicates only the equalising 22. ♖xd7 ♙xd7 23. ♙xa7 ♜a8 24. ♜d1) 22... ♜xf4 (22... ♜e7 23. ♙d6) 23. gxf4 ♜e7 24. ♜b1 ♙a3 25. ♖xb7 ♙c8 26. ♖a5 ♜xe2 27. ♖xc6 and it's not easy to survive. Euwe, as usual, prefers a clearer path.

### 17. ... ♖d7xe5

On 17... fxe5 White has a range of tempting continuations: 18. ♜xd7!?, transposing to previous variations, or the calmer 18. ♖g5, 18. ♙g5 or 18. ♙e3.

### 18. ♖e4-g5 f6xg5

The lesser evil was 18... ♙f7 19. ♖xf7 ♜xf7 20. ♙h3 ♜ff8 but Alekhine hoped to save himself with the help of tactics.

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 19. ♙f4xe5 | ♙e7-f6! |
| 20. ♙e5xb8 | ♙f6xc3  |
| 21. ♙b8-d6 | ♜f8-f7  |
| 22. b2xc3  | ♜f7-d7  |

Black has won back a piece, but his troubles are far from over.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 23. ♜d1-b1! | ♜d7xd6 |
| 24. ♜b1xb7  | ♜d8-d7 |
| 25. ♜b7xd7  |        |

25. ♜b8+ ♙f7 26. f4 g4 27. ♜c8=.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 25. ...    | ♙e6xd7 |
| 26. ♙g2-e4 |        |

Once more White prefers the most solid and reliable move, which is sufficient for victory. 26. ♜b1 was more natural.

### 26. ... c6-c5?!

Alekhine could have greatly complicated his opponent's task with 26... ♜d2 27. ♙d3 ♙h3 28. ♜b1 g4!.

### 27. c3-c4 ♙d7xa4?

Black rushes to re-establish material equality but overlooks White's less than obvious 30th move. There were more chances of defending after 27... ♜a6 or 27... ♜d2.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 28. ♙e4-d5+ | ♙g8-f8 |
| 29. ♜f1-a1  | ♜d6-a6 |



### 30. ♜a1-a2!

White finds a fundamental way to eliminate Black's ideas connected with ♙a4-b5 and converts his pawn superiority in the centre. Black is totally paralysed and can't do a thing about this simple plan.

30. ... ♖f8-e7  
31. f2-f4 g5xf4  
32. g3xf4 ♕e7-f6

13. ... ♙f5-e6!  
14. ♘c4xe5

32... ♖g6+ 33. ♕f2 ♙d7 34. ♖xa7.

A perfectly plausible reaction. However, when Alekhine decided to use this system as Black in the first game of the 1937 match, Euwe was the first to deviate: 14. ♘e4 ♙b4 15. a5.

33. e2-e4 g7-g5  
34. f4-f5 h7-h5  
35. h2-h4 g5xh4  
36. ♖g1-h2 ♖f6-g5  
37. ♖h2-h3 ♖a6-a5  
38. ♙d5-b7! ♖g5-f6  
39. ♙b7-d5 ♖f6-g5  
40. ♙d5-b7 ♖g5-f6  
41. ♙b7-c8 1-0

14. ... ♘d7xe5  
15. a4-a5 a7-a6!  
16. ♘c3-e4 ♙f8-b4!?

16... ♙e7 17. ♘c5 ♙xc5 (17... ♙c8 18. ♙e3) 18. ♖xc5 ♖e7; 16... ♖d5!? 17. ♖c3 ♖b5 18. ♖a4 ♙e7.

[D17]

Game 15

Alexander Alekhine  
Max Euwe

Netherlands Wch-m 1935 (21)

17. ♘e4-c5

17. ♙d2 ♙xd2 18. ♘xd2 0-0.

1. d2-d4 d7-d5  
2. c2-c4 c7-c6  
3. ♘g1-f3 ♘g8-f6  
4. ♘b1-c3 d5xc4  
5. a2-a4 ♙c8-f5  
6. ♘f3-e5 ♘b8-d7  
7. ♘e5xc4 ♖d8-c7  
8. g2-g3 e7-e5  
9. d4xe5 ♘d7xe5  
10. ♙c1-f4 ♘f6-d7  
11. ♙f1-g2 ♖a8-d8  
12. ♖d1-c1 f7-f6  
13. 0-0

17. ... ♙e6-c8

17... ♙xc5 18. ♖xc5 ♖e7; 17... ♙d5!? 18. e4 ♙f7 19. ♖a4 ♖d4!.

18. ♙f4xe5

18. ♘d3 ♘xd3 19. ♙xc7 ♘xc1 20. ♖axc1 ♖d2 21. ♖fd1; 18. ♙e3!? ♙xa5 19. f4 ♘g4! (19... ♘g6? 20. ♘xa6! bxa6 21. ♖xc6+ ♘f7 22. ♙d5+ ♘f8 23. ♖c5+ ♖e7 24. ♖xa5 ♖xd5 25. ♖xc8+) 20. ♘xb7!? ♙xb7 21. h3 ♘xe3 22. ♖xe3+ ♖e7 23. ♖xe7+ ♘xe7 24. ♖xa5 ♖d2.

18. ... f6xe5

18... ♖xe5 19. ♘d3 ♖b5.



## 19. f2-f4?

19. ♖d3 ♙xa5 20. ♖c5 ♙b6 21. ♖xe5+  
 ♖xe5 22. ♖xe5 ♙d4; 19. ♖c4! ♙d4  
 20. ♖c2 ♙d2 21. ♖c4.

19. ... ♙b4-d2!

20. ♖c1-c4

20. ♖c2 exf4 21. gxf4 0-0.

20. ... ♙d8-d4

21. ♖c4-b3

21. ♖e6? ♖f7!.

21. ... e5xf4

22. g3xf4 ♖c7-e7!

23. ♖c5-d3 ♙c8-e6

24. ♖b3-a3 ♙e6-c4

25. ♙g1-h1 ♖e7xa3

26. ♙a1xa3 0-0

27. ♙a3-a4 ♙f8-d8

28. ♙a4-a3 ♙c4xd3

29. e2xd3 ♙d4-b4

30. ♙f1-f2 ♙b4xb2

31. ♙g2-f1 ♙d8-d4

32. f4-f5 ♙d4-f4

33. ♙f2xf4 ♙d2xf4

34. h2-h3 ♙f4-d6

35. ♙a3-a1 ♙g8-f7

36. d3-d4 ♙f7-f6

37. ♙a1-e1 ♙d6-b4

38. ♙e1-a1 ♙b2-d2

39. ♙f1-c4 ♙d2xd4

40. ♙c4-e6 ♙d4-d3

0-1

Alekhine never recovered from that severe psychological blow. It turned out that in positions where the strategic picture was clear Euwe was, at the very least, his formidable opponent's equal. The match score was levelled, but the challenger had seized the initiative.

It was during the 21st game that events took place that gave rise to rumours

about the World Champion's drinking. There was undoubtedly some cause. Up until that point Alekhine had also handled the growing tension in a match that had come as a complete surprise to him in his customary manner. But it was only from this point on, it seems, that he lost control not only over the course of the match, but over himself as well.

It would be quite appropriate here to touch on a somewhat delicate topic: chess and alcohol. I won't state the obvious and prove that drinking is harmful and that sport at the highest level goes badly with even low-level alcoholism. As François De La Rochefoucauld said: 'The bad behaviour of others isn't an example to imitate, but a warning'. However, even in this seemingly indisputable case, the general rules aren't so undeniably applicable to chess.

The career of a chess grandmaster lasts not years, but decades. In the majority of sports the retirement age comes just when chess players are entering their prime. Moreover, in other disciplines sportsmen are constantly under the watchful gaze of a coach, which almost completely rules out temptations. Chess is a much more peculiar form of activity and it's not uncommon for a player also to be his own coach, which only increases the mental overload and stress. From my point of view it's not merely permissible for mature chess players to relieve the stress after a nervous game with a glass of wine, but in some situations it's simply beneficial. Of course, you have to know your limit. History, however, is full of amusing examples of a player giving his sober opponent a hefty start, but ultimately ending up the winner. I don't know how one of Grandmaster Kholmov's games

ended after starting with the following moves: 1.e4 ♘c6 2.d4 b6 3.♘f3 e5 4.dxe5 when he said in amazement: 'I've played the Grünfeld Defence a lot, but I've never ended up with such a bad position'. Another story told by Grandmaster Averbakh is, however, well-known. In their game Kholmov, who was extremely worn out after downing too much alcohol the night before, would periodically fall asleep. Averbakh considered it his duty to wake him, and the reward for such nobility wasn't long in coming. The rested Kholmov conducted the ending of their game extremely well and punished his opponent for his misplaced sensitivity. During Soviet tournaments, which often lasted for a few weeks, 'violating the regime' was quite a widespread phenomenon. In the absence of other entertainment alcohol would often serve as a decent replacement or supplement. Although chess has now changed and tournaments are incomparably more intense, it's a topic that's by no means lost its relevance.

These stories actually only look amusing on paper. In reality when you encounter a similar situation you can get distracted, because there isn't a single manual that tells you what kind of approach to adopt against a drunk opponent. Grandmaster Taimanov once committed a typical mistake. His opponent, Grandmaster Stahlberg, reached a certain point in his career after which he simply couldn't play completely sober, but in the run-up to this game he'd exceeded all conceivable norms. After getting a big advantage from the opening, Taimanov decided to end the game in a hurry with a direct but, as it turned

out, not entirely correct attack. The immediate danger to his king sobered the Swede up and he successfully parried all the threats and reached a won position. True, he no longer had enough energy to convert the advantage and the game ended in a draw, but how should you behave in such situations? Are there any tried and tested guidelines? Of course, it's highly appropriate for the arbiters to get involved, but what if the decision depends on you alone?

I'll share an example from my own career. This took place in the resort of Sochi during a match between grandmasters and young masters in 1970. For one of the rounds Grandmasters Suetin and Lutikov arrived in a less than optimum state, or to put it bluntly, they were pretty tipsy. To be fair, it wasn't to such an extent that they weren't aware of the fact. Therefore, when they reached the boards both of them immediately offered draws. Lutikov's opponent, Podgaets, 'accommodated his colleague', but I decided to refuse.

[D93]

**Vladimir Tukmakov**

**Alexey Suetin**

Sochi 1970 (5)

Game 16

- |     |        |        |
|-----|--------|--------|
| 1.  | d2-d4  | ♘g8-f6 |
| 2.  | c2-c4  | g7-g6  |
| 3.  | ♘b1-c3 | d7-d5  |
| 4.  | ♘g1-f3 | ♙f8-g7 |
| 5.  | ♙c1-f4 | 0-0    |
| 6.  | e2-e3  | c7-c5  |
| 7.  | d4xc5  | ♙d8-a5 |
| 8.  | ♙a1-c1 | d5xc4  |
| 9.  | ♙f1xc4 | ♘b8-c6 |
| 10. | 0-0    | ♙a5xc5 |
| 11. | ♙c4-b3 | ♙c5-a5 |





The theory of this position was already quite well known back then. Black's plans include playing 12...g4, so 12.h3 is White's usual reaction. However, the irregular situation provoked me into taking an unusual decision.

## 12. ♖f3-g5?!

During the game I was extremely proud of this move.

## 12. ... ♕c8-g4?!



The practical effectiveness of theoretical novelties is that it's rare for anyone to manage to find the optimum response at the board. It's only later, after home analysis, that everyone becomes wise and all-knowing. It's no surprise then that my tired opponent didn't react in the best manner, but it seems I was also knocked off balance as I clearly overestimated the value of my own discovery.

Two rounds later I boldly repeated this dubious opening experiment. My opponent, however, turned out to be ready: 12...h6! 13.♗ge4 (more consistent is 13.♗xf7!? ♜xf7 14.♕xf7+ ♜xf7 15.♜b3+ ♜f8 16.♜fd1 and White's lead in development almost compensates for the slight material deficit) 13...♗h5 (13...♗xe4 14.♗xe4 ♕f5 also wasn't bad) 14.♗d5 ♗xf4 15.♗xf4 ♜e5 (15...♕f5) 16.♗xg6 ♜xe4 17.♗xf8 ♕xf8 18.♕d5 ♜b4 19.♜c2 (19.♜h5!) 19...e6 20.a3 ♜b6 21.♕xc6 bxc6 22.♜xc6 ♜xc6 23.♜xc6 ♕b7= Tukmakov-Stein, Sochi 1970, Round 7. The game ended in a draw, but no-one ever repeated the extravagant knight lunge in this position.

## 13. ♕b3xf7+

Correct is 13.f3! ♕d7 (13...♕c8!) 14.♗xf7 ♜xf7 15.♕xf7+ ♜xf7 16.♜b3+ ♜f8 17.♜xb7 with better chances, but I'd overlooked a hidden defensive resource for Black.

## 13. ... ♜f8xf7

## 14. ♜d1-b3?

It still wasn't too late to return to the correct path with 14.f3! ♕c8! 15.♜b3 e6 16.♗xf7 ♜xf7 17.♗b5, although it's no longer as strong as it would have been a move earlier.

## 14. ... ♜a8-f8?

Now the advantage passes to White once and for all. The best defence was 14...♗d8! 15.h3 (15.♗xf7 ♕e6! – this was the move I'd overlooked when I played 13.♕xf7+) 15...♕d7 16.♜fd1 ♕e8 with better chances.

## 15. ♗g5xf7

## 16. ♜b3xb7

## ♜f8xf7

## ♗c6-b4?

Black doesn't withstand the tension. He should have played 16...e5 17. ♖xc6 exf4 18. exf4 and the outcome of the battle would be far from clear.

### 17. ♙f4-c7!

Now it's all over.

17. ...	♗a5-c5
18. ♘c3-e4	♗c5-f5
19. ♘e4-g3	♗f5-d7
20. ♗b7xb4	♘f6-d5
21. ♗b4-b8+	♚f7-f8
22. ♗b8-b3	♙g4-e6
23. ♚f1-d1	♚f8-c8
24. e3-e4	♘d5-b6
25. ♚d1xd7	♙e6xb3
26. ♚d7-d8+	♚c8xd8
27. ♙c7xd8	♙b3xa2
28. ♚c1-a1	♙a2-b3
29. ♚a1xa7	1-0

Let's try to analyse White's actions in such an unusual situation. From an ethical point of view my position strikes me as absolutely correct, but the purely chess decisions were far from flawless.

An opening novelty is a great resource, but it's desirable if it's been thought up at home and not under the influence of the liquor fumes emanating from your opponent. It was also absolutely unacceptable to repeat it without careful checking. The desire to provoke a crisis on the board as soon as possible was a clear mistake. On the contrary, you should maintain the tension for as long as possible, handing the esteemed right to take critical decisions over to your opponent. It's not that you should rely on your opponent making mistakes, but you should create the right conditions for them – in that sense Euwe's play in the 21st match game can serve as a model. Plus, in no case whatsoever

should you wake up your opponent, however much you want to!

By winning the World Championship match Max Euwe clearly demonstrated the crucial role of comprehensive and all-round preparation in the struggle at the highest level. Alekhine learned the Amsterdam teacher's lesson well. Two years later he appeared in a new and unfamiliar guise: he'd lost weight, given up drink completely and in general had devoted his life to a single goal – reclaiming the title.

The psychological situation was also diametrically reversed – it was now Euwe who was considered the favourite, which by no means helped him to maintain his usual composure. In contrast, Alekhine was incomparably calmer and more balanced than two years previously. Finally, in comparison to the first match he was much more cautious, and his positional evaluation was marked by greater objectivity.

Only once, but at the most crucial moment, did Alekhine play in his old rampaging style. However, the knight sacrifice as early as move 6 wasn't a risk he took on the spur of the moment, but instead something which this time had been analysed in detail at home. Overwhelmed by the pressure he came under, Euwe lost in only a few moves, although it later turned out there was a significant hole in White's analysis.

### [D10]

#### Alexander Alekhine Max Euwe

Netherlands Wch-m 1937 (6)

Game 17

Before the start of this game the score in the match was 3:2 in the World Cham-

pion's favour. Alekhine was desperate for a win, and he got one, as if someone had waved a magic wand. It was a win that inspired one player and totally demoralised the other – deciding the match. True, it was Alekhine himself who appeared in the role of the magician.

- |    |                  |              |
|----|------------------|--------------|
| 1. | <b>d2-d4</b>     | <b>d7-d5</b> |
| 2. | <b>c2-c4</b>     | <b>c7-c6</b> |
| 3. | <b>♖b1-c3</b>    | <b>d5xc4</b> |
| 4. | <b>e2-e4</b>     | <b>e7-e5</b> |
| 5. | <b>♙f1xc4!!?</b> |              |



An absolutely brilliant find by Alekhine! Its creative value increases many times over if you note that White had a natural and safe alternative: 5.♘f3 exd4 6.♙xd4 ♗xd4 7.♘xd4 b5 8.a4 b4 9.♘d1 ♙a6 10.♙e3 (10.♙f4 ♘f6 11.f3 ♙c5 12.♘f5 0-0 13.♖c1 c3! 14.bxc3 g6 15.♘g3 ♘fd7!= Kasparov-Hübner, Belfort 1988) 10...♘f6 11.f3 (Alekhine) with a small but stable edge for White. Moreover, after 5.♘f3 the decision on whether to sacrifice could have been delayed for a move after the forced reply 5...exd4. But White decided not to torment himself with hesitation and burnt his bridges at the first opportunity.

5. ... **e5xd4**

5...♙xd4 6.♙b3 ♗d7 7.♙g5! with ♖d1 to follow. White's initiative would have been threatening.

6. ♘g1-f3!



At this point any other move would be criminal cowardice! What should Black play? It's perfectly obvious that the most principled response is capturing on c3, especially as a forced win isn't immediately visible for White. On the other hand, it's clear that all the consequences of the sacrifice had been painstakingly analysed at home by his opponent. If Alekhine decided to head for the storm instead of a quiet harbour, it meant he'd taken all the nuances into account. As a consequence, the piece can't be taken. The desire to deviate from the natural course of events by any means, and to spring a surprise in response, often leads to serious mistakes. In modern chess it's quite a common situation – after all, the all-powerful MF participates in the analysis. It's good advice to put more trust in your own intuition. Euwe, however, preferred logic and knowledge to intuition...

6. ... **b7-b5?**

And here's the result! But let's try to understand the situation not in terms of general considerations, as in the previ-

ous note, but in the dry language of variations. After 6...♙c5, if you nevertheless avoid accepting the sacrifice, White has 7.♘e5!? – also not bad are the calm 7.♘e2 and the sharp 7.0-0 dxc3 8.♙xf7+ ♖e7 9.♚b3 ♘f6.

So it turns out the piece should be taken: 6...dxc3 7.♙xf7+ ♖e7 8.♚b3.



A) In his notes to the game the winner gives the results of his home preparation: 8...♘f6 9.e5 ♘e4 10.0-0!

A1) 10...♚b6 11.♚c4! cxb2 12.♙xb2 ♚xb2 13.♚xe4 ♘xf7 14.♘g5+ ♖e8 15.♚f4 ♙e7 (15...♙d7) 16.♚f7+ ♘d8 17.♙ad1+ ♙d7 18.♘e6+ ♖c8 19.♚xe7 ♚xe5 20.♙fe1 ♚f6 (20...♚a5 21.♘c5 ♙d8 22.♘e4) 21.♙xd7 ♘xd7 22.♚d6+–;

A2) 10...♘a6 11.♚c4 ♘ac5 12.♙g5+! ♘xg5 13.♘xg5 with a dangerous and probably winning attack. It's impressive, particularly if you recall that he did the analysis exclusively using his own head, hands and pieces!

B) The oversight in the analysis is also humanly understandable: taking on b2 includes the white bishop in the attack, which is illogical: 8...cxb2! 9.♙xb2 ♚b6! 10.♙a3+ (10.♙xg8 ♙xg8 11.♚xg8 ♚b4+ 12.♘d2 ♚xb2 13.♙b1 ♚c2) 10...c5 11.♙xg8 ♙xg8 12.♙xc5+ (12.♚xg8 ♚a5+) 12...♚xc5 13.0-0



13...♚h5 (this difficult-to-find but at the same time only move was the sort of thing easily missed in old-fashioned analysis (such problems are a piece of cake for the MF), but other resources are of little use: 13...♙h8 14.♙fc1 ♚b6 15.♙xc8 ♚xb3 16.axb3±; 13...♘c6 14.♚xg8 h6 15.♙ab1) 14.♚xg8 ♙e6 15.♚h8 ♘c6 – Black's advantage is undeniable, although the battle isn't yet over.

So the fantastic concept turned out to have a flaw and was, strictly speaking, incorrect. But let's speculate a little. How would Alekhine have acted if he'd known the ultimate diagnosis of his idea? I'm convinced that nothing would have changed: both the game and the match would have followed the same course they did in reality, only adding a significant element of conscious risk (bluff, if you like) – after all, the Russian Champion was a real gambler! I've no doubt Tal would also have done the same.

But what decision would you have taken, dear reader?

## 7. ♘c3xb5!

Euwe had missed this fairly simple move. However, we've already talked about the nature of such mistakes.

## 7. ...

## ♙c8-a6



**8. ♖d1-b3!**

The best way to continue the attack, though it was also possible to play 8. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 9. ♘fxd4. Alekhine brings the game to its logical conclusion with great energy and style.

**8. ... ♖d8-e7**

If 8... ♗xb5? 9. ♗xf7+ ♔d7 10. ♘xd4! White's attack is irresistible.

**9. 0-0 ♗a6xb5**

**10. ♗c4xb5 ♘g8-f6**

10...cxb5? 11. ♖d5 is no use.

**11. ♗b5-c4**

For such a position you might even give up a piece, but the material's equal. The outcome of the game is essentially a foregone conclusion.

**11. ... ♘b8-d7**

**12. ♘f3xd4! ♜a8-b8**

**13. ♖b3-c2 ♖e7-c5**

**14. ♘d4-f5**

14. ♘xc6? ♜c8.

**14. ... ♘d7-e5**

**15. ♗c1-f4!**

The last piece enters the fray. Less clear is 15. ♘xg7+?! ♔d8 16. ♜d1+ ♔c7.

**15. ... ♘f6-h5**



**16. ♗c4xf7+!**

**♔e8xf7**

**17. ♖c2xc5**

**♗f8xc5**

**18. ♗f4xe5**

**♜b8-b5**

18... ♜be8 19. ♗d6.

**19. ♗e5-d6**

**♗c5-b6**

**20. b2-b4**

**♜h8-d8**

**21. ♜a1-d1**

**c6-c5**

**22. b4xc5**

**♗b6xc5**

**23. ♜d1-d5**

**1-0**

It's hard to overestimate the psychological effect of such wins. Alekhine was inspired, went on to win the next two games, and never let his initiative slip. As a result the return match ended in a convincing victory and the World Championship title returned to Alekhine.

What conclusions can be drawn from that confrontation?

In the first match the 'amateur' Euwe, despite seemingly being inferior in all areas, taught the World Champion a lesson. It turned out that chess was also a field where order could beat class, and intelligent and carefully planned preparation plays an enormous role. Fortunately for Alekhine, he turned out to be a conscientious pupil.

Meanwhile, a chess player was coming to the fore who would raise comprehensive preparation for individual

games and events to cult status. We're talking, of course, about Mikhail Botvinnik. The foundations of his sensational victory over the World Champion were established long before the players sat down at the board.

[D41]

Game 18

**Mikhail Botvinnik**  
**Alexander Alekhine**

Netherlands AVRO 1938 (7)

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. ♖g1-f3 | d7-d5  |
| 2. d2-d4  | ♟g8-f6 |
| 3. c2-c4  | e7-e6  |
| 4. ♜b1-c3 | c7-c5  |
| 5. c4xd5  | ♞f6xd5 |
| 6. e2-e3  |        |

Botvinnik's note is characteristic: 'A year ago in the return match for the World Championship this system was encountered four times, and it was played by both Euwe and Alekhine. Of course I avoided the variations that occurred in their games...'

I'd add that in order to bypass the highways of theory it's essential to do a huge amount of research. In the match mentioned above White chose 6.e4 and 6.g3.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 6. ...      | ♞b8-c6 |
| 7. ♕f1-c4!? |        |



Until Botvinnik no-one had played like this, but the move is far from an improvisation. Instead it's the start of a deeply thought-out system of development, the nuances of which even the World Champion couldn't grasp.

- |        |       |
|--------|-------|
| 7. ... | c5xd4 |
|--------|-------|

There was probably no need to rush this exchange. However, this allows Alekhine to avoid the variations with a possible capture on d5 and c5.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 8. e3xd4   | ♞f8-e7 |
| 9. 0-0     | 0-0    |
| 10. ♜f1-e1 |        |



- |         |         |
|---------|---------|
| 10. ... | b7-b6?! |
|---------|---------|

A natural move, but one which leads to serious difficulties. It was preferable to play 10...a6 or 10...♞f6.

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 11. ♞c3xd5! |  |
|-------------|--|

Here's where the position of the bishop on c4 makes a difference. Black is forced to take on d5 with the pawn, thereby emphasising the drawback of his previous move – the weakening of the c6-point. If the pawn was on b7 White's exchange operation would have been much less effective.

- |            |          |
|------------|----------|
| 11. ...    | e6xd5    |
| 12. ♞c4-b5 | ♞c8-d7?! |

Another serious inaccuracy, after which Black's position becomes difficult. Better was 12...♙b7 13.♚a4 ♖c8 14.♙f4 a6 15.♙xc6 ♗xc6 16.♘e5 ♗e6! (it's less accurate to play 16...♖c8 17.♚d7 ♙a8 18.♖ac1 when White has an edge, as occurred in Neikirkh-Sliwa, Sofia zonal 1957).

**13. ♚d1-a4      ♘c6-b8**

13...♖c8 14.♙f4±.

**14. ♙c1-f4      ♙d7xb5**

**15. ♚a4xb5      a7-a6**

**16. ♚b5-a4      ♙e7-d6**

**17. ♙f4xd6      ♚d8xd6**

**18. ♖a1-c1      ♖a8-a7**



White has a lot of trumps – too many, however paradoxical that may sound. While Black's pawn weaknesses on the queenside are chronic, White will have to give up one of the open files. In such positions with queens on the board it's preferable to control the e-file – closer to the king. In the endgame, on the other hand, the c-file is more significant. Botvinnik puts his trust in the endgame.

**19. ♚a4-c2!      ♖a7-e7**

**20. ♖e1xe7      ♚d6xe7**

**21. ♚c2-c7      ♚e7xc7**

**22. ♖c1xc7      f7-f6**

**23. ♙g1-f1!**

23.♙b7?! ♖c8 24.♙f1 b5 is clearly premature.

**23. ...      ♖f8-f7**

**24. ♖c7-c8+      ♖f7-f8**

**25. ♖c8-c3!**

Despite the limited material Black's position is unenviable: essentially none of the three pieces can move. All that remains is to push pawns on the kingside, which only creates new weaknesses. White just needs to display restraint and not spoil anything when he inevitably picks up material.

**25. ...      g7-g5**

**26. ♘f3-e1      h7-h5**

**27. h2-h4!      ♘b8-d7**



**Mikhail Botvinnik**

After 27...♙f7 the strongest move is 28.hxg5 (28.♘f3 g4 29.♘e1 ♖e8 gives Black some counterplay) 28...fxg5 29.♘f3 ♙f6 30.♘e5. No good at all is 27...gxh4 28.♘f3.

**28. ♖c3-c7      ♖f8-f7**

**29. ♘e1-f3      g5-g4**

**30. ♘f3-e1**

The white knight is now heading for the dominant f4-square.

30. ... f6-f5  
31. ♖e1-d3 f5-f4



32. f2-f3!

Botvinnik is not tempted by immediate material gains: 32. ♖b4 ♖f6 33. ♖xa6 f3.

32. ... g4xf3  
33. g2xf3 a6-a5  
34. a2-a4 ♖g8-f8  
35. ♖c7-c6 ♖f8-e7  
36. ♖f1-f2 ♖f7-f5  
37. b2-b3 ♖e7-d8  
38. ♖f2-e2 ♖d7-b8  
39. ♖c6-g6!

Here as well, greed would only create difficulties: 39. ♖xb6 ♖c7 40. ♖b5 ♖c6.

39. ... ♖d8-c7  
40. ♖d3-e5 ♖b8-a6  
41. ♖g6-g7+

41. ♖g5 was an even simpler win.

41. ... ♖c7-c8  
42. ♖e5-c6 ♖f5-f6  
43. ♖c6-e7+ ♖c8-d8  
44. ♖e7xd5 ♖f6-d6  
45. ♖g7-g5 ♖a6-b4  
46. ♖d5xb4 a5xb4  
47. ♖g5xh5 ♖d6-c6

47... ♖xd4 48. ♖e5!.

48. ♖h5-b5 ♖d8-c7  
49. ♖b5xb4 ♖c6-h6  
50. ♖b4-b5 ♖h6xh4  
51. ♖e2-d3 1-0



An impressive picture!

The depth of the new World Championship challenger's analytical gift is perfectly illustrated by the following game.

[E35]

Game 19

Paul Keres

Mikhail Botvinnik

Leningrad/Moscow ch-URS 1941 (3)

1. d2-d4 ♖g8-f6  
2. c2-c4 e7-e6  
3. ♖b1-c3 ♖f8-b4  
4. ♖d1-c2 d7-d5  
5. c4xd5 e6xd5

After the game Beliavsky-Romanishin, Groningen 1993, the continuation 5... ♖xd5 6. ♖f3 ♖f5!? became very popular.

6. ♖c1-g5 h7-h6  
7. ♖g5-h4

Safer is 7. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 8. a3 ♖xc3+ 9. ♖xc3 0-0 10. e3 c6 11. ♖f3 although such a barren position isn't to everyone's taste.



**7. ... c7-c5!?**



Nikolic handled this position differently against Kasparov (Belgrade 1989): 7...g5 8.♘g3 ♘e4 9.e3 c6 10.♘d3 ♘xg3 11.hxg3 ♙e6, but after 12.a3 the weakening of the kingside proved unjustified. Going for counterplay in the centre appears to be a more logical plan.

**8. 0-0-0?**

Amazing naivety for a chess player of such quality! Keres repeats the game Mikenas-Botvinnik, USSR Championship, Moscow 1940, probably having trusted the result. Also unconvincing is 8.e3?! cxd4 9.exd4 ♘c6 10.♙b5 0-0 11.♘e2 ♚b6 12.♚d3 ♙xc3+ 13.bxc3 ♘e4 14.0-0 ♙f5 as played in the game Kotov-Botvinnik, USSR Championship, Moscow 1940. Black is clearly better.

After the apparently logical 8.♘f3 all problems are solved by 8...cxd4! (also possible is 8...g5 9.♘g3 ♘e4 10.e3 ♙f5 11.♘d3 c4 12.♙xe4 ♙xe4 13.♚a4+ ♘c6 14.♘e5?! ♙xg2 15.♘xc6 ♙xc3+ 16.bxc3 ♚d7 17.♙g1 ♙e4 as played by Ponomarev in a rapid game against Malakhov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009) 9.♘xd4 ♘c6 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.a3 ♙e7 12.e3 0-0.

The most principled continuation is 8.dxc5! g5 (8...0-0 9.e3 ♘bd7 10.♘d3 ♚a5 11.♘e2 ♙xc3+ 12.♚xc3 ♚xc3+ 13.♘xc3, Kasparov-Kortchnoi, Tilburg 1989) 9.♘g3 ♘e4 10.e3 ♚a5 11.♘e2 ♙f5 12.♙e5 Kasparov-Short, 9th match game, London Wch 1993.

**8. ... ♙b4xc3!**

An improvement on the Mikenas game mentioned above, which went: 8...0-0! 9.dxc5! ♙xc3 10.♚xc3 g5 11.♘g3 ♘e4 12.♚a3 ♙e6 13.f3 ♘xg3 14.hxg3. However, the strong text move was by no means Botvinnik's discovery.

**9. ♚c2xc3**

It's too late to deviate: 9.♙xf6 ♙xb2+! 10.♙xb2 ♚xf6 11.♚xc5 ♘a6 12.♚xd5 0-0 and things are going to turn out badly for White.

**9. ... g7-g5**  
**10. ♙h4-g3**



**10. ... c5xd4!**

Up until this moment the players had been repeating the game Belavenets-Simagin, Moscow Championship 1940, where Black played 10...♘e4, which also isn't bad. However, Botvinnik's tempo-winning move, which he'd analysed in detail during his preparation, is significantly stronger. White is essen-

tially already doomed. In contrast to his opponent Keres was probably seeing this position for the first time.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 11. ♖c3xd4 | ♟b8-c6 |
| 12. ♖d4-a4 | ♞c8-f5 |
| 13. e2-e3  |        |

In his notes Botvinnik suggests the best move is 13.f3 ♖b6 14.e4 dxe4 15.♟b1, but after 15...exf3+ 16.♟a1 everything wins for Black.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 13. ...    | ♞a8-c8 |
| 14. ♞f1-d3 |        |

Equivalent to resigning the game, but 14.♟e2 0-0 15.♟c3 ♟e4 16.♖a3 ♖b6, with numerous threats, was little better for White.

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 14. ...    | ♖d8-d7! |
| 15. ♟c1-b1 | ♞f5xd3+ |
| 16. ♞d1xd3 | ♖d7-f5  |
| 17. e3-e4  | ♟f6xe4  |
| 18. ♟b1-a1 | 0-0     |
| 19. ♞d3-d1 | b7-b5   |
| 20. ♖a4xb5 | ♟c6-d4  |
| 21. ♖b5-d3 | ♟d4-c2+ |
| 22. ♟a1-b1 | ♟c2-b4  |
| 0-1        |         |

A terrible rout! Moreover, that victory over one of the world's strongest chess players was essentially claimed at home in the laboratory.

### SSC or SCO?

The Second World War not only fundamentally altered the political landscape by making half of Europe totally dependent on the Soviet Union. International chess also found itself under Soviet rule. True, the power change in the realm of chess took place without tanks and planes, but the dominance of Soviet chess was no less obvious and convincing.

Following Alekhine's death in 1946 a match-tournament was held in 1948 between the world's top-five strongest players, designed to determine the successor to the late champion. Mikhail Botvinnik scored a convincing victory and became the Sixth World Chess Champion.

What was impressive was not just the number of points scored, but also the new champion's style of play. Clear, logical and based on wonderful opening preparation and flawlessly constructed strategic plans, it bore no similarity to the bold tactical style of Alekhine and had none of Capablanca's artistry, but that made his wins seem even more convincing.

His effect on his opponent was like that of an invincible machine, and there were few who could stand up to that powerful onslaught. In the next encounter between the Fifth and Sixth World Champions the difference in the depth of opening preparation was obvious.

### [D49] Mikhail Botvinnik Max Euwe

Game 20

The Hague/Moscow Wch 1948 (12)

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4  | d7-d5  |
| 2. ♟g1-f3 | ♟g8-f6 |
| 3. c2-c4  | e7-e6  |
| 4. ♟b1-c3 | c7-c6  |
| 5. e2-e3  | ♟b8-d7 |
| 6. ♞f1-d3 | d5xc4  |
| 7. ♞d3xc4 | b7-b5  |
| 8. ♞c4-d3 | a7-a6  |

An old continuation that still hasn't lost its relevance today. Another popular line is 8...♞b7 9.e4 b4 10.♟a4 c5; 8...b4 has also been played more than once.

- |          |       |
|----------|-------|
| 9. e3-e4 | c6-c5 |
|----------|-------|

## 10. e4-e5

Thousands of games have also been played on the theme of 10.d5. The fashion alternates between these two moves.

10. ... **c5xd4**  
11. ♖c3xb5 **a6xb5**

Botvinnik had good results with this variation for both colours. With black he preferred 11...♖xe5 12.♖xe5 axb5.

## 12. e5xf6



12. ... **♖d8-b6**

It can't be ruled out that the evaluation of the move 10.e5 depends on who's favoured by the complications arising after 12...gxf6 13.0-0 ♖b6 14.♖e2 (less promising is 14.♖e4 ♖b7 15.♖xb7 ♖xb7 16.♖xd4 ♖g8 and Black has no problems) 14...♖b7 15.♖xb5. This position became the subject of discussion in the World Championship match between Kramnik and Anand in 2008. Both 15...♖d6 in the third game, and 15...♖g8 in the fifth brought Black success, and victory in this theoretical duel essentially won Anand the World Championship title. The move selected by Euwe was considered the main line at the time. However, if the Dutch grandmaster simply followed the theoretical recommendations

everything for Botvinnik was, by his own account, thoroughly analysed.

13. **f6xg7** ♖f8xg7  
14. **0-0**



Botvinnik: 'I'd prepared all this before the war and checked it in April 1939 in a training match against Ragozin. Euwe keeps to the theoretical recommendation. Could he have known it was mistaken?'

14. ... **♖d7-c5?!**

Both Botvinnik in his commentary on the game and Kasparov in *My Great Predecessors* evaluate the position after 14...♖b7 15.♖e1 0-0 16.♖f4 ♖d5 17.♖e5 (17.♖e2!?) 17...♖xe5 18.♖xe5 ♖xe5 19.♖xe5 f5 20.♖xd5! exd5 21.♖b3 as favouring White. However, things aren't so clear: 21...♖e6! (21...♖c5 22.♖xb5 ♖fb8 23.♖g3+ really is dangerous for Black) 22.♖xb5 f4 23.♖d1 f3 24.g3 ♖ab8! with a double-edged position.

15. **♖c1-f4** ♖c8-b7  
16. **♖f1-e1** ♖a8-d8?

A mistake, after which Black's position goes downhill once and for all. Also bad is 16...0-0? 17.♖xh7+! ♖xh7 18.♖g5+ ♖g6 19.♖g4 with a winning attack, but he should have exchanged a few pieces: 16...♖xd3 17.♖xd3 ♖xf3! 18.♖xf3 0-0 and things are not so bad for Black.

**17. ♖a1-c1 ♜d8-d5**

Now if 17...♜xd3 18.♞xd3 then apart from anything else 19.♙c7 is threatened.

**18. ♙f4-e5****18. ... ♙g7xe5**

There was no longer a satisfactory defence, which is clear from the following variations:

A) 18...♜xd3 19.♞xd3 ♙xe5 20.♜xe5 ♞d6!? 21.♞g3! d3 22.♞cd1 d2 23.♞e2;

B) 18...0-0 19.♙xg7 ♜xg7 20.♜e5 ♜xd3 21.♞xd3 ♞g8 22.♞f3!.

**19. ♞e1xe5 ♜d5xe5**

The last chance to prolong the resistance was 19...♜xd3 20.♞xd3 ♞d6! 21.♞xd5 ♞xd5 22.♞xd4 0-0!±.

**20. ♜f3xe5 ♜c5xd3****21. ♞d1xd3 f7-f6**

21...♞g8 would only have provided Black with a few dying checks after 22.♞xh7!, e.g. 22...♞xg2+ 23.♜f1 ♞xf2+ 24.♜xf2 d3+ 25.♜f1 ♙g2+ and so on.

**22. ♞d3-g3!**

An elegant finale!

<b>22. ...</b>	<b>f6xe5</b>
<b>23. ♞g3-g7</b>	<b>♞h8-f8</b>
<b>24. ♞c1-c7</b>	<b>♞b6xc7</b>
<b>25. ♞g7xc7</b>	<b>♙b7-d5</b>
<b>26. ♞c7xe5</b>	

The rest requires no words.

<b>26. ...</b>	<b>d4-d3</b>
<b>27. ♞e5-e3</b>	<b>♙d5-c4</b>
<b>28. b2-b3</b>	<b>♞f8-f7</b>
<b>29. f2-f3</b>	<b>♞f7-d7</b>
<b>30. ♞e3-d2</b>	<b>e6-e5</b>
<b>31. b3xc4</b>	<b>b5xc4</b>
<b>32. ♜g1-f2</b>	<b>♜e8-f7</b>
<b>33. ♜f2-e3</b>	<b>♜f7-e6</b>
<b>34. ♞d2-b4</b>	<b>♞d7-c7</b>
<b>35. ♜e3-d2</b>	<b>♞c7-c6</b>
<b>36. a2-a4</b>	<b>1-0</b>

While Euwe demonstrated his usual knowledge of modern theory in this game, his successor supplemented that with deep and independent research. Botvinnik's win was a triumph of organisation, dedication and preparation. The new champion's whole life was devoted to one goal, and every detail along the way mattered. No less precise than Euwe, he turned out to be much deeper and more comprehensive than his predecessor.

'The scientific approach allowed Botvinnik to create an unprecedented system of preparation for events, involving fundamental work on the

opening, the systematic study of the styles of his opponents and a scrupulous analysis of his own games. Publication was obligatory so the analysis could be criticised by others' – that's how the Sixth World Champion's contribution is rated by one of his most conscientious and most talented, pupils – Garry Kasparov.

The young Soviet Champion first shared his system of preparation in 1933 during his match against Flohr. In contrast to Euwe and Alekhine, who only resorted to comprehensive preparation methods for World Championship matches, Botvinnik adopted them as a weapon on a permanent basis. At the same time he would take into account every detail, every individual feature of his future opponent.

Botvinnik was the first to use training games seriously as preparation for events – and not only for trying out purely chess ideas. During those games he simulated every possible situation. Given that back then it was permitted to smoke during games Botvinnik would get someone to blow cigar smoke at him. He switched a radio on at top volume so he wouldn't react to spectator noise in the tournament hall. During tournaments he steadfastly adhered to a daily routine, one broken down literally by the minute. He scrupulously studied the route to the tournament hall: it had to pass through quiet streets and take 20-25 minutes. Nutrition was also an important element of preparation. Particular attention was paid to phosphorus, essential for intense mental activity. He constantly replenished it with appropriate products. Kortchnoi, who always in-

cluded black caviar in his daily tournament menu, learned that from Botvinnik. The young Soviet World Champion didn't forget about sex either. Or rather, he considered it obligatory to forget about it during events, and also during preparation for them. After all, sex uses up the same phosphorus that's so essential for chess.

Of course, some of the postulates in Botvinnik's 'teachings' now strike us as naïve, others, to put it mildly, as debatable, but his personal faith in the formulated principles was boundless. Everything, absolutely everything, was subordinated to achieving success – the young Leningrad resident didn't need to work on ambition. Moreover, his personal drive happily coincided with the politics of the young and powerful state he represented. Theoretical preparation was also raised to a new level: he carefully studied not only openings and the middlegame positions arising out of them, but also typical endgames – his predecessors didn't even suspect the existence of such depths.

The 1948 match-tournament produced not only a new World Champion. Second and third place were also claimed by the Soviet Champions Smyslov and Keres. Both rose to prominence before the war, but soon new names from the Soviet Union began to appear as if on a conveyor belt: first Bronstein and Boleslavsky, then Geller, Petrosian, Averbakh, Taimanov... The first Candidates' Tournament in 1950 also ended with a comprehensive victory for Soviet chess players, who occupied the top-four places. The next game was played between the winners, who fought for the right to take on the World Champion.

[D89]

**David Bronstein**  
**Isaak Boleslavsky**

Moscow m 1950 (1)

Game 21

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4  | ♘g8-f6 |
| 2. c2-c4  | g7-g6  |
| 3. ♞b1-c3 | d7-d5  |
| 4. c4xd5  | ♞f6xd5 |
| 5. e2-e4  | ♞d5xc3 |
| 6. b2xc3  | c7-c5  |
| 7. ♙f1-c4 | ♙f8-g7 |
| 8. ♞g1-e2 | 0-0    |
| 9. 0-0    | c5xd4  |

Kasparov's matches against Karpov gave a new lease to life to what had seemed to be an unpromising line, 13. ♙xf7+!?. Nevertheless, in the intervening years reliable methods of neutralising White's minimal edge have been worked out for Black. For a while there was a fashion for 13. ♙d5 ♙d7 14. ♞b1, but here as well after 14...a6! 15. ♙xb7 ♞a7 16. ♙d5 ♙b5 17. a4 ♙xe2 18. ♞xe2 e6 19. ♙c4 ♙xd4 Black holds.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 13. ...    | ♙g4-e6 |
| 14. d4-d5  | ♙g7xa1 |
| 15. ♞d1xa1 | f7-f6  |
| 16. ♙e3-h6 |        |

The modern treatment of this variation is more flexible. Black usually refrains from the immediate exchange in the centre and prefers 9...♞c6 10. ♙e3:

A) 10...♞c7 is the classical line, but other branches have been worked out in detail and tried frequently over the board;

B) 10...♙g4 11. f3 ♞a5 (11...♙d7) 12. ♙xf7+ ♞xf7 13. fxg4 ♞xf1+ 14. ♙xf1 cxd4 (14...♞d6 15. e5 ♞d5 16. ♙f2 ♞d8 17. ♞a4 b6 18. ♞c2 ♞c8 19. ♞d1 ♞d8) 15. cxd4;

C) 10...♞a5 11. ♙d3 b6;

D) 10...♙d7.

However, a detailed analysis of these continuations is a topic for a totally different book, and one very dear to me as an old 'Grünfelder'.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 10. c3xd4  | ♞b8-c6 |
| 11. ♙c1-e3 | ♙c8-g4 |

It's considered less accurate to play the immediate 11...♞a5 12. ♙d3 ♙e6 13. d5 ♙xa1 14. ♞xa1 f6 15. ♙h6 ♞e8 16. ♞f4. Including f2-f3 gives Black additional defensive resources.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 12. f2-f3  | ♞c6-a5 |
| 13. ♙c4-d3 |        |



In the decades since that time White has also tried out other possibilities of developing an initiative: 16. ♞b1 ♙d7 or 16...b6; 16. ♞d4 ♙f7; 16. ♙h1 but they don't alter the fundamental evaluation of the position as approximately equal.

- |         |           |
|---------|-----------|
| 16. ... | ♞d8-b6+?! |
|---------|-----------|

At the time the move in the game was thought to resolve Black's problems, but during his preparation Bronstein carefully noted the drawbacks of this natural continuation. It's actually the case, as later becomes clear, that the tempi won by Black are ephemeral – all of the moves that follow for White fit into his general plan, and ultimately what had

seemed to be a win of time turns out to be a loss. The main continuation for Black is now considered to be 16...♖e8 17.♗h1 ♕d7 (17...♜c8 18.♘f4 ♕d7 19.e5 ♘c4 leads, by a transposition of moves, to the same position) 18.e5 ♜c8 19.♘f4 ♘c4 20.e6 ♖a4 21.♘xg6! hxg6 22.♖xg6 with great complications. All of this looks very exciting and even Romantic, but in our harsh reality more often than not it leads to a forced draw somewhere around move 40.

### 17. ♖g1-h1

Up until this point the players were repeating their game from the main tournament in Budapest. There White played differently: 17.♘d4 ♕d7 18.♞b1 ♜c5 19.♞c1 ♜b6 20.♖xf8 ♞xf8 21.h4 ♞d8 22.♗h1. White's position is preferable, but after the natural 22...♜d6?! (22...e5!?) White could actually have got a solid edge with the help of the less than obvious 23.♖b5! With the move in the game Bronstein aims for more.

### 17. ... ♞f8-d8

Consistent, in any case. After 17...♕d7 18.♞b1 ♜d6 19.♖xf8 ♞xf8 20.♜c3 b6 21.♖a6 White has a stable advantage.

### 18. ♞f1-b1! ♜b6-c5!

The risky 18...♜f2? 19.♜c3 ♕h3 would only worsen Black's situation: 20.♘f4 ♕d7 (little better is 20...♖xg2+ 21.♘xg2 ♜xa2 22.♞a1 ♜b3 23.♜c7±) 21.d6 ♜h4 22.dxe7 ♞dc8 23.♜xa5 ♜xh6 24.♜d5+ ♗h8 25.♜d6 ♜g5 26.♘e2 ♖c6 27.f4 ♜h6 28.♘d4 and White fully dominates the board.

### 19. ♖h6-d2!



Sharply altering the direction of the main strike! Both of Black's minor pieces turn out to be under real threat.

### 19. ... b7-b6?

It's only this reflex move that finally determines White has an edge. Despite the opinion that's formed historically, things aren't so bad for Black. His play up until this point really was quite logical. It was possible to justify the venture with 16...♜b6 and 17...♞d8 only with the help of 19...♘c6!:

A) 20.♖c3!? ♜e3 21.♖c4 ♕f7 22.♞xb7 ♞ab8 23.♞c7 ♘e5 (23...♘b4!?) 24.♖xe5 fxe5 but Black holds here as well;

B) 20.dxc6 bxc6! (20...♞xd3? 21.cxb7 ♞b8 22.♖f4 is bad) 21.♞c1 (21.♘c1!? ♞ab8! 22.♞xb8 ♞xb8 also with an unclear position) 21...♜a3 22.♞c3 ♜xa2 23.♜e1 c5!. This unconventional position is equally difficult both to play and to evaluate.

Less promising for Black is 19...♞ac8 20.♞b5 ♜a3 21.♞b1 ♘c6 22.♞b3 ♜d6 23.dxe6 b6 24.♘f4±.

### 20. ♖d2-b4 ♜c5-c7 21. ♞b1-c1 ♜c7-b7

It doesn't help to play 21...♜d7 22.♘d4 ♖xd5 (22...♖f7 23.♖b5 ♜b7 24.♖xa5 bxa5 25.♖c6+-) 23.♖b5 ♜b7 24.♖xa5±.

**22. ♔a1-b1 ♚a8-b8?**

Unexpected capitulation. Both after 22...♙c8 23.♘f4 and after 22...♚d7 23.♙a6 ♙f7 24.♘d4 White's chances were undoubtedly greater, but there was still everything to play for.

**23. d5xe6**

Now, however, Black's position can no longer be saved.

- |                    |                |
|--------------------|----------------|
| <b>23. ...</b>     | <b>♘a5-c6</b>  |
| <b>24. ♙b4-c3</b>  | <b>♘c6-e5</b>  |
| <b>25. ♙d3-b5</b>  | <b>♚b8-c8</b>  |
| <b>26. ♙c3xe5</b>  | <b>♚c8xc1+</b> |
| <b>27. ♚b1xc1</b>  | <b>f6xe5</b>   |
| <b>28. ♙b5-d7</b>  | <b>♚b7-a6</b>  |
| <b>29. ♘e2-g3</b>  | <b>♚a6xa2</b>  |
| <b>30. h2-h4!</b>  | <b>♚d8-f8</b>  |
| <b>31. ♚c1-g5</b>  | <b>♚f8-f6</b>  |
| <b>32. ♚g5xf6!</b> | <b>1-0</b>     |

A principled opening duel followed by intense combat in the middlegame, with the cost of each mistake magnified – all of that is characteristic not only of the given encounter, but also of chess in the post-war period as a whole. The main role in this 'intensification' was played by representatives of the Soviet Union.

The 'Soviet School of Chess' – in chess literature that's just as common a phrase as 'Marxist-Leninist Teachings' was in the everyday life of Soviet citizens. Moreover, the first was more of an environmentally pure product, if you can put it like that. The teachings of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin were, after all, originally an imported product, and adapting them to the unusual local conditions didn't pass without difficulties. The army of state ideologues somehow handled those

problems, but it required constant work on the population.

The chess plant, on the contrary, grew on uniquely Soviet soil, no other shoots got in the way, and therefore it was called upon to highlight the advantages of the Soviet system as a whole. Getting to the bottom of that phenomenon is not only interesting, but also instructive. That the word 'Soviet' in chess was for many decades synonymous with the very highest quality is a fact that's been repeatedly and convincingly confirmed. So the modifiers in the phrase don't raise any concerns. The key word 'SCHOOL', however, doesn't in my view reflect the essence and cause of the undeniable domination of Soviet chess players. It would seem to be no laughing matter. The hegemony (not fearing lofty words) of Soviet chess players in the second half of the twentieth century was undeniable (the appearance of Fischer could be considered an unfortunate episode). Led by their leader – Mikhail Botvinnik – they won all the titles in existence.

The 'developed socialist' country didn't have that many arguments to oppose to the capitalist West, so chess, an intellectual and entertaining game, was transformed into an institution. Chess was now called upon to embody sport, art and science.

A noble lineage was also constructed: Petrov-Chigorin-Alekhine-Botvinnik and so on. True, that heritage was doubtful, and in general Alekhine was mobilised by force from a different ideological camp, but what lengths won't you go to in the name of political expediency? Botvinnik's style had nothing in common with that of his appointed predecessors, although even that small detail could be overlooked.



Just as Marx's economic research was, with the help of skilful ideological equilibrists, used to create the all-conquering teachings of Marx-Lenin-Stalin, so Botvinnik's modest articles on his own system of preparation for events were transformed into the Teachings, a peculiar Gospel for Soviet chess players. That was how all the prerequisites were established for the emergence of the all-conquering Soviet School of Chess – or SSC, if we resort, as was the fashion of the time, to abbreviations.

In art or science, school implies a group of followers united by a leader, who develop the theory or direction proposed by that leader. However, if you think about it, Botvinnik's system of preparation can be considered only the first (important for its time, but a little naive) manual for professional chess players. Ideology and citizenship played a secondary role. Continuity was also an important condition but, for example, the line Morphy-Zukertort-Marshall-Reshevsky-Fischer looks, at the very least, no less convincing, though you don't hear any serious claims being made about the existence of an American School of Chess.

If you look more closely at the creative portraits of the Soviet chess players you'll discover little in common between Botvinnik and Bronstein, Keres and Geller, Tal and Petrosian or Kortchnoi and Spassky. At the same time, Gligoric and Portisch, for example, can to a much greater extent be counted among Botvinnik's followers, although we know they weren't Soviets. However, there must be something to explain that undeniable phenomenon – the overwhelming superiority of the

representatives of one country over the rest of the world.

Yes, such a factor undoubtedly existed. And that mysterious something was... ORGANISATION. The state provided Soviet chess players with unprecedented conditions that their rivals in other countries could only dream of. Grandmasters and even masters received a salary solely for their professional activity, while the prestige of chess players was raised to unprecedented heights. The best representatives of the profession received the right to travel abroad, which at the time was a rare privilege. Moreover, all those obvious benefits didn't come tied to the onerous obligations that were essential for success in other areas – like membership of the Communist Party or co-operation with the KGB.

The contribution of the Patriarch, as Botvinnik was often called, was truly great. He was the undisputed leader of his artificially created party and the symbol and banner of Soviet chess. It was largely due to Botvinnik that the word grandmaster was pronounced with awe in that enormous Union, while chess tournaments drew thousands of spectators.

Fierce competition based, on the one hand, on the incredible popularity of chess, and on the other on the closed system, also aided the growth of mastery. In such conditions only the strongest survived, those who happily combined pure chess talent with mental resilience, and the ability to work tirelessly with sporting pragmatism. So it would be right to describe that conglomerate not as a School but as an Organisation – the Soviet Chess Organisa-

tion – SCO. It was the SCO that established the conditions essential for the mass development and improvement of PROFESSIONAL chess – a concept that didn't exist in the West.

Constant creative interaction and training camps were routine for the SCO, but unknown back then for their rivals – that gave Soviet chess players a tangible advantage over their foreign colleagues. Winning an opening duel against a grandmaster from the USSR was extremely difficult, though that made it all the more alluring. Such attempts, however, were rarely crowned by success.

An unprecedented incident took place at the Interzonal Tournament in Gothenburg. In all three games where the luck of the draw saw an encounter between players from Argentina and the USSR, an absolutely identical position appeared on the board. On the eve of the games the Argentinian players and their coach had carefully analysed one of the sharpest variations of the Sicilian Defence and come to the conclusion that the provocative advance of the g-pawn on the 9th move was entirely possible, while responding with a knight sacrifice was not only insufficient for White to win, but would leave him on the verge of defeat.

Here's what became of that head-on encounter.

[B98]

Game 22

**Paul Keres**

**Miguel Najdorf**

Gothenburg izt 1955 (14)

- |           |       |
|-----------|-------|
| 1. e2-e4  | c7-c5 |
| 2. ♘g1-f3 | d7-d6 |
| 3. d2-d4  | c5xd4 |

- |           |         |
|-----------|---------|
| 4. ♘f3xd4 | ♘g8-f6  |
| 5. ♘b1-c3 | a7-a6   |
| 6. ♙c1-g5 | e7-e6   |
| 7. f2-f4  | ♙f8-e7  |
| 8. ♖d1-f3 | h7-h6   |
| 9. ♙g5-h4 | g7-g5!? |

At the time this was a novelty – the fruit of the Argentinians' collective creativity.

10. f4xg5      ♘f6-d7



The critical position of the whole variation.

11. ♘d4xe6!

It was precisely this obvious sacrifice that was seen in all three of the above-mentioned games. For the Argentinians it wasn't a surprise, and its consequences had been thoroughly analysed the night before – or in any case, that's what they thought. Geller was the first to go for the sacrifice, and his example was soon followed by Spassky and Keres.

However, this critical move was far from obligatory. Also not bad is 11. ♖h5 ♘e5 12. ♙f2 ♙xg5 13. h4 with queenside castling to follow, which also subsequently occurred in practice.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 11. ...     | f7xe6  |
| 12. ♖f3-h5+ | ♙e8-f8 |



### 13. ♖f1-b5!

This spectacular move, made by all the Soviet grandmasters, had also been analysed by the Argentinians. It's probably the strongest, although also tried later was 13. ♖c4 ♘e5 14. ♖g3! ♘bc6 15. gxh6. This position needs further checking both by computers and in practice.

### 13. ... ♔f8-g7

Panno followed the path marked out at home: 13... ♘e5? but he came up against a response from Geller that hadn't been envisaged in the analysis:

A) Probably, as often happened in those pre-computer times, the analysis had only looked at the automatic 14. 0-0+ ♔g8! 15. ♖g3 (the MF suggests the strongest move is 15. ♜f6!? ♖xf6 16. gxf6 but after 16... ♔h7 the attack hits a dead-end) 15... hxg5 with a win;

B) 14. ♖g3! after which salvation can no longer be found. In the game a few more moves were made: 14... ♖xg5 15. 0-0+ ♔e7 16. ♖xe5 ♜b6+ 17. ♔h1 dxe5 18. ♜f7+ ♔d6 19. ♜ad1+ after which everything became clear.

The experienced Najdorf and Pilnik quickly grasped what was going on and made adjustments on the fly. The move in the game is undoubtedly stronger than

13... ♘e5?, but it doesn't eliminate Black's difficulties. For a long time the main resource for Black became 13... ♜h7, which was found soon after the Argentinian fiasco and first played by Fischer.



14. ♜g6 (more commonly seen was 14. 0-0+ ♔g8 15. g6 ♜g7 16. ♜f7 ♖xh4 17. ♜xh6 ♜xf7 18. gxf7+ ♔xf7 19. ♜h7+, which Keres had already suggested in the commentary on this game, although no more than a draw has been found for White. However, the resources of this position are far from exhausted) 14... ♜f7 15. ♜xh6+ ♔g8 16. ♜g6+ ♜g7 17. ♜xe6+ ♔h8 and Black defended successfully (Gligoric-Fischer, Portoroz 1958). In my opinion questions remain in this branch.

14. 0-0 ♘d7-e5

15. ♖h4-g3 ♘e5-g6

If 15... ♜g8? there's the winning 16. ♖xe5+ dxe5 17. ♖e8!, while after 15... ♘bc6? everything is decided by the simple 16. ♖xc6.

16. g5xh6+ ♜h8xh6

17. ♜f1-f7+ ♔g7xf7

18. ♜h5xh6 a6xb5

19. ♜a1-f1+ ♔f7-e8

20. ♜h6xg6+ ♔e8-d7

21. ♜f1-f7! ♘b8-c6

22. ♘c3-d5! ♜a8xa2

It's even worse to accept the sacrifice: 22...exd5 23.♔xd6+ ♕e8 24.♔g6 ♕d7 25.exd5 ♖xa2 and now simplest is 26.dxc6+ bxc6 27.♙d6.

### 23. h2-h4

Amazingly up until this moment the Spassky-Pilnik game had also been following this same ruinous path for Black. The future World Champion played more subtly: 23.h3, after which Black needed to play 23...♖xb2 (Pilnik followed Najdorf's example to the end: 23...♔h8? 24.♙xe7 ♙xe7 25.♔g5 with a rapid win for White) 24.♙h2! (essential prophylaxis! Things aren't entirely clear after the straightforward 24.♙xe7 ♙xe7 25.♙h4 ♕c6! 26.♖xe7 ♖xc2) 24...♖b1 25.♙xe7 ♙xe7 26.♙h4 ♕c6 27.♖xe7 with a winning attack for White.

### 23. ... ♔d8-h8?

Now as well it's more stubborn to play 23...♖xb2, though it wouldn't have altered the outcome of the battle: 24.h5 ♖xc2 25.h6 and White wins.

24. ♙d5xe7 ♙c6xe7  
25. ♔g6-g5 1-0

The collective but clearly amateur creativity of the Argentinian chess players didn't withstand the test of the Soviet chess machine.

It's extremely rare to encounter such cases of collective suicide, but I happened to be a witness to, and even something of an unwilling participant, in an event which bore a distant resemblance to what happened in Gothenburg.

Hegel famously said that history is usually repeated twice, and if the first time it's often in the form of tragedy, the repetition frequently turns into a farce.

The incident in question took place in the final round of the Ukrainian Championship. The tournament situation was very tense as a large group of players had a chance to qualify for the USSR Championship. The author of these lines was leading his rivals by half a point, but a draw would give me little chance due to worse tiebreakers if places were shared.

That meant I had to play for a win with Black. I chose my opening accordingly – the King's Indian Defence. Having boldly bashed out the theoretical moves, at some point I vigorously (just like the Argentinians) pushed my g-pawn. However, my opponent's unexpected response practically put an end to my hopes – after a forced exchange of queens Black's hopes of a win were reduced practically to zero.

Meanwhile, the exact same position arose in a game between two of my direct competitors, Podgaets-Kots. Yury Kots, who'd arrived late for the game (back then the regulations allowed such things), had a glance around and started to repeat my moves. He also blindly repeated my unfortunate pawn advance. When my opponent's reply appeared on the demonstration board Kots instantly grasped what had happened.

At the time Yury was one of the strongest masters in Ukraine and on a couple of occasions he'd qualified for the USSR Championship, which was a decent visiting card. He was much better known, however, among card-playing professionals, where his rating significantly surpassed his chess rating. He wasn't above using methods that were far from gentlemanly, so counting on blind luck wasn't his style.

Without waiting for his opponent to also see the discouraging queen reply he rushed to the demonstration board and blocked it with his less than mighty body. He remained standing in that awkward pose for quite a long time, until Podgaets made his reply. His suffering wasn't in vain: either his opponent considered the queen exchange insufficient (he also needed a win), or for some other reason he took a different decision. That didn't, however, save Kots.

[E69]

Game 23

**Mikhail Steinberg**

**Vladimir Tukmakov**

Kyiv ch-UKR 1968 (17)

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 1. c2-c4   | ♘g8-f6 |
| 2. ♜b1-c3  | g7-g6  |
| 3. g2-g3   | ♙f8-g7 |
| 4. ♙f1-g2  | 0-0    |
| 5. ♘g1-f3  | d7-d6  |
| 6. 0-0     | e7-e5  |
| 7. d2-d4   | ♘b8-d7 |
| 8. e2-e4   | c7-c6  |
| 9. h2-h3   | ♚d8-a5 |
| 10. ♜f1-e1 | e5xd4  |
| 11. ♘f3xd4 | ♜f8-e8 |
| 12. ♙c1-e3 | ♘d7-e5 |
| 13. ♙g2-f1 | ♙c8-e6 |
| 14. ♘d4xe6 | ♜e8xe6 |
| 15. ♚g1-g2 | ♜a8-e8 |
| 16. f2-f3  |        |



It was at this point that the events described took place. Relying on ChessBase it's hard to get an idea of the state of theory back then in this variation – many important games from Soviet tournaments simply haven't ended up there – including the ones described. I've got a clear memory of playing fairly confidently up until this point. I suspect only Black's next move was an improvisation.

16. ...

**g6-g5?!**

At first glance Black's idea is very interesting: to put one knight on g6, the other on h5 and bring the bishop out to e5, and the slightly weakened white king might find itself in danger. Unfortunately there turned out to be a move that immediately puts an end to Black's aggressive aspirations. More circumspect was 16...a6, with a complex and perfectly pleasant position.

17. ♚d1-a4!

Alas, the exchange of queens is now inevitable, and play will by and large be only for two possible results, excluding precisely the one that was absolutely vital for me. The flaws in Black's last move could also have been emphasised by 17.c5!, as after 17...dxc5 the simple 18.♙xg5 will follow, with an edge for White. But the complications arising after 17.c5 ♘h5! 18.♙xg5 ♜g6 19.f4 ♘xg3 20.♚xg3 ♚xc5 would undoubtedly have been the lesser evil for Black, given the tournament situation. Podgaets chose the simple 17.♜b1 h6 (more in the spirit of the position was 17...♘h5!?) 18.b4 ♚c7 19.♚b3 ♘ed7 (19...♘h5!? 20.♘e2 ♜f6) 20.♜bc1 ♘h5 21.♙f2 ♚b8 22.♜ed1 ♙e5 23.♘e2 ♜g6 24.♘d4 and gradually converted his advantage into a win.

17. ... ♔a5xa4  
 18. ♖c3xa4 h7-h6  
 19. ♚a1-d1 ♖e5-d7  
 20. ♖a4-c3 ♖f6-h5  
 21. ♙e3-d4



21. ... f7-f5!

Essential activity. After 21...♙e5 22.♙xe5 ♖xe5 23.♙e2 ♖f6 24.♚d2 Black would face a long struggle for equality.

22. ♙d4-f2

Leading to full equality was 22.♙xa7 ♙xc3 (22...f4 23.g4 ♖g3) 23.bxc3 ♚a8 24.♙f2 fxe4 25.♚xe4 ♚xe4 26.fxe4 ♖hf6 27.♚xd6 ♚xa2.

22. ... f5-f4  
 23. g3-g4 ♖h5-g3  
 24. ♙f2xg3 f4xg3

24...♙xc3 25.bxc3 fxg3=.

25. ♖c3-e2!

White has managed to achieve a certain advantage, but it's not enough to win.

25. ... c6-c5  
 26. b2-b3 ♖d7-f8  
 27. ♖e2xg3 ♖f8-g6  
 28. ♖g3-f5 ♖g6-h4+  
 29. ♖f5xh4 g5xh4  
 30. f3-f4 ♚e6xe4

31. ♚e1xe4 ♚e8xe4  
 32. ♖g2-f3 ♚e4-d4  
 33. ♚d1xd4 ♙g7xd4  
 34. ♖f3-e4 ♖g8-f7  
 35. ♖e4-f5 ♙d4-e3  
 36. ♙f1-g2 b7-b6  
 37. ♙g2-d5+ ♖f7-e7  
 38. ♙d5-b7 ♙e3-d2  
 39. ♙b7-g2 ♖e7-f7  
 40. ♙g2-d5+ ♖f7-e7  
 1/2-1/2

I fared little better. Despite matching the points for the qualifying places I didn't make it into the final.

While the story in Gothenburg was christened the 'Argentinian tragedy', what happened in the Ukrainian Championship smacked more of farce.

Returning to the SCO, you could say that the fifties were already marked by its complete dominance. First Bronstein, and then Smyslov, by no means like-minded followers of Botvinnik, tried to emerge from his shadow. Vasily Smyslov was more successful, even seizing the palm of supremacy, though only for a year. However, the Patriarch's chess authority remained unshakeable, and his system of preparation was declared the cornerstone of the famous Soviet School of Chess.

The appearance of Mikhail Tal ushered in a genuine revolution. He was someone you really couldn't call a pupil or successor of Botvinnik. Rather, he was his antipode – both in the chess and the human sense.

Tal was Botvinnik's refutation, or rather an attempt at a refutation. In some ways it was even deliberate, as both the clearly invented stories and the 'absolutely trustworthy' eye-witness testi-

monies about his neglect for preparation were far from the truth. The iconoclast even spent more time on chess than Botvinnik, but the nature of that immersion was utterly different.

If what the Patriarch wanted most was for his internal barometer to indicate CLEAR, while all deviations should be foreseen and predicted, the tempestuous Tal preferred not to look at the instrument at all. For him predictability was dull and uninteresting. Extreme clarity deprived chess of its element of



**Mikhail Tal**

being a game. Tal's preparation for games was entirely in keeping with that conception. The main thing wasn't to get as close to the truth as possible, but to find an interesting idea to inspire creativity. For Botvinnik the ideal preparation reduced the element of chance to a minimum. Tal was repelled by such an idea. His opening ideas were sometimes guilty of superficiality not only because he lacked the patience or perseverance to bring analysis to an exhaustive conclusion, but also because he found it UNINTERESTING to know the result in advance. In that sense Tal was

very similar to Alekhine. And if you were trying to establish a chess family tree, it's Tal you'd need to place after Chigorin and Alekhine.

You could also describe their personal attitudes to the battle as antagonistic. For Botvinnik the confrontation wasn't confined to the chessboard, but was a total struggle against his opponent. What was good for his enemy (that's the word!) was bad for him, and vice versa. That attitude of the Patriarch and the SCO found its reflection in the matches between Karpov and Kortchnoi, and in the confrontation between Karpov and Kasparov. Echoes of that tradition can sometimes still be heard today.

Tal's 'non-resistance' to Botvinnik was, of course, unconscious, but at the same time extremely effective. His opponent's mental aggression withered when it met no resistance, and had, instead, the opposite effect.

The first game already set the tone for the whole match.

**[C18]**

**Mikhail Tal**

**Mikhail Botvinnik**

Moscow Wch-m 1960 (1)

Game 24

### 1. e2-e4

This move couldn't possibly have come as a surprise for Botvinnik – his young opponent declared what he was going to do immediately after becoming the challenger.

- |           |               |
|-----------|---------------|
| 1. ...    | <b>e7-e6</b>  |
| 2. d2-d4  | <b>d7-d5</b>  |
| 3. ♖b1-c3 | <b>♙f8-b4</b> |

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 4. e4-e5   | c7-c5   |
| 5. a2-a3   | ♙b4xc3+ |
| 6. b2xc3   | ♚d8-c7  |
| 7. ♚d1-g4  | f7-f5   |
| 8. ♚g4-g3  | ♘g8-e7  |
| 9. ♚g3xg7  | ♙h8-g8  |
| 10. ♚g7xh7 | c5xd4   |

Both Botvinnik's favourite French Defence and the ensuing position were also easy to predict.



### 11. ♚e1-d1!?

The origin of this far from obvious move is more uncertain. One of the legends that accompanied Tal his whole life was that 11.♚d1 had been discovered by Tal's trainer Alexander Koblents among some old journals that were randomly scattered on the floor. And this was supposed to have happened literally an hour before the start of the first game of the World Championship match. The challenger, having barely glanced at the ensuing wild variations, exclaimed: 'Excellent, that's how I'll play!' A beautiful story, smoothly fitting the image of the 'Magician from Riga', especially as the first mention of the move really was made by Euwe at the end of the forties. But fairytales rarely stand up to the test of facts.

11.♚d1!? was first played in practice by Gligoric against Petrosian, and that took place in 1959, at the Candidates' Tournament triumphantly won by Tal! It's simply impossible to suppose that the game had escaped his attention or been forgotten. So everything was, alas, much more prosaic, and the extravagant king move was noted and analysed in advance. The 'normal' move is 11.♘e2, which also leads to a complex but more predictable position. 11...♘bc6 12.f4 ♘d7 13.♚h3 dxc3 14.♚xc3 0-0-0 15.g3 ♙e8 16.♙g2 ♙h5, with a good position for Black, was seen, for example, in the game R. Byrne-Botvinnik, Monte Carlo 1968.

### 11. ... ♙c8-d7!?

Botvinnik also turned out to be prepared for such a course of events, and was the first to deviate from the source game. Petrosian chose 11...♘bc6 12.♘f3 ♘xe5?! (12...dxc3!?) 13.♙g5 ♘5g6 and after 14.♙xe7?! ♘xe7 15.cxd4 ♘d7 he'd equalised, but more problems would have been posed for Black by 14.♙f6!.

### 12. ♚h7-h5+ ♘e7-g6

12...♚d8, as played by Botvinnik in the 12th game of the return match with Tal, is interesting. That game went: 13.♘f3 ♚xc3 14.♙a2 ♘bc6 15.♙b2 ♚c7 16.♙b5 ♙h8 (16...a6!? 17.♙b2 axb5 18.♙xc3 dxc3, Nakamura-Berg, Bermuda 2003. 16...♚a1!? hasn't yet been tried in practice) 17.♚xh8 ♙xh8 18.♙b2 ♚xf3+ 19.gxf3. Although Black had perfectly sufficient compensation for the exchange Tal also won that encounter.

### 13. ♘g1-e2





### 13. ... d4-d3

The logical follow-up to 11...♙d7. Nevertheless, this move took Botvinnik 37 minutes, which indicates some degree of uncertainty. We can only guess at when Black's home preparation came to an end. It's possible that White's 12th move was already a surprise, but most likely the character of the position was not entirely in the spirit of the World Champion, who prefers a clearer picture.

Instead of the move in the game it was worth considering 13...dxc3!? or 13...♙c6!?.

### 14. c2xd3 ♙d7-a4+ 15. ♙d1-e1 ♙c7xe5

15...♙c6 is more interesting, sacrificing a second pawn, though that would have been more in Tal's spirit than Botvinnik's.

### 16. ♙c1-g5! ♙b8-c6 17. d3-d4 ♙e5-c7

White's problem remains his lag in development and his unaccommodated monarch. Tal resolves the problem very elegantly, including his rooks in the struggle in a less than traditional manner, while he simply leaves the king in the centre.

### 18. h2-h4! e6-e5



Trying to make use of the factors mentioned. The calm 18...♙e7 19.♙h3 0-0-0 20.♙e3 gave White an edge.

### 19. ♙h1-h3! ♙c7-f7

If 19...f4 it's not so good to play Tal's recommendation of 20.♙g4 because of 20...♙f7 21.h5 ♙f8, but very strong is 20.dxe5! ♙xe5 21.♙d2! with the inclusion of the queen's rook to follow. 19...e4 20.♙f4 ♙f7 21.♙b1 promises Black nothing.

### 20. d4xe5! ♙c6xe5 21. ♙h3-e3 ♙e8-d7 22. ♙a1-b1 b7-b6 23. ♙e2-f4

Amazingly, all the white pieces have been harmoniously developed, and the king is also perfectly safe in the centre.

### 23. ... ♙a8-e8 24. ♙b1-b4 ♙a4-c6 25. ♙h5-d1



To complete the picture the queen also returns to the starting position! Deprived of a sense of beauty, the MF considers the strongest move to be the prosaic 25. ♖xg6 ♖xg6 26. ♕d3. It's possible to agree with that, but impossible to admire.

- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| <b>25. ...</b>    | <b>♖g6xf4</b>    |
| <b>26. ♖b4xf4</b> | <b>♖e5-g6</b>    |
| <b>27. ♖f4-d4</b> | <b>♖e8xe3+?!</b> |

Also bad is 27...f4 28. ♖xe8 ♖xe8+ 29. ♕d2!, but a little more stubborn is the immediate 27...♕c7.

- |                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>28. f2xe3!</b> | <b>♕d7-c7</b> |
| <b>29. c3-c4!</b> |               |

Decisively opening up all the lines and diagonals.

- |                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>29. ...</b>    | <b>d5xc4</b>  |
| <b>30. ♕f1xc4</b> | <b>♖f7-g7</b> |
| <b>31. ♕c4xg8</b> | <b>♖g7xg8</b> |
| <b>32. h4-h5</b>  | <b>1-0</b>    |

It became obvious that Botvinnik was in for a tough test. It wasn't only a matter of losing the opening encounter, which is always unpleasant, but that the character of the struggle – disjointed and illogical – couldn't appeal to him, while it suited his opponent perfectly. Sharp, wide-ranging moves, apparently unconnected but united by some kind of internal harmony – the World Champion wasn't ready for such play.

Even more provocative, though also typical of Tal's approach to the opening, was the third game. Such experiments fit the credo he formulated well: 'For such a tiring match it's much more important to maintain a fresh head than to arrive for the games with two suitcases full of theoretical novelties but, because of fatigue, find yourself in no fit state to sustain the opening advantage'.

[B11]

Game 25

**Mikhail Tal**

**Mikhail Botvinnik**

Moscow Wch-m 1960 (3)

- |                  |               |
|------------------|---------------|
| <b>1. e2-e4</b>  | <b>c7-c6</b>  |
| <b>2. ♖b1-c3</b> | <b>d7-d5</b>  |
| <b>3. ♖g1-f3</b> | <b>♕c8-g4</b> |
| <b>4. h2-h3</b>  | <b>♕g4xf3</b> |



- 5. g2xf3!?**

As in the first game Tal tries, right from the outset, to give the game an unusual shape. The avoidance of classical schemes with a clear strategic plan was undoubtedly part of his general approach to the whole match. However, on this occasion it's hard to consider White's idea a success. With the help of fairly simple means Botvinnik managed to emphasise the drawbacks of White's last move. It's no accident that 5.gxf3 found no followers at the highest level, while the miserable 30 examples in the database are a drop in the ocean compared to the 3,000 games for 5. ♖xf3. As part of a match strategy, however, such an experiment justified itself. On encountering a surprise Botvinnik would usually start to have a long think, get into time trouble, and ultimately that circumstance often proved to be decisive. This game followed just such a path.

- |               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| <b>5. ...</b> | <b>e7-e6</b> |
|---------------|--------------|

A game discovered in the database is of uncertain origin, but makes a great impression: 5...e5 6.f4 dxe4 7.fxe5 ♖d4 8.♗e2 ♗xe5 9.d4 ♗xd4 10.♘xe4 ♙e7 11.♙f4 ♗xb2 12.♚d1 ♘f6 13.♘d6+ ♔f8 14.♗xe7+ ♔xe7 15.♘f5+ ♔e8 16.♘g7+ ♔f8 17.♙d6+ ♔xg7 18.♙g1+ ♘g4 19.♙xg4+ ♔f6 20.♙f4+ ♔g7 with a draw by perpetual check, Tal-Koblents, Moscow 1960. You couldn't, of course, expect such Romanticism from the World Champion.

- |           |               |        |
|-----------|---------------|--------|
| <b>6.</b> | <b>d2-d4</b>  | ♘b8-d7 |
| <b>7.</b> | <b>♙c1-f4</b> | ♙f8-b4 |
| <b>8.</b> | <b>h3-h4</b>  | ♘g8-f6 |



## 9. e4-e5?!

Now the pawn structure is determined once and for all, and it's easier for Black to play. More in Tal's spirit was 9.♗d3 ♙xc3+ 10.bxc3, although after 10...♗e7 Black has an extremely solid position.

- |            |               |        |
|------------|---------------|--------|
| <b>9.</b>  | <b>...</b>    | ♘f6-h5 |
| <b>10.</b> | <b>♙f4-g5</b> | ♗d8-a5 |

All in the same rigorous style. Objectively stronger, perhaps, was 10...f6 11.f4 (11.exf6 gxf6 12.♙d2 ♗c7 favours Black) 11...g6 12.♙h6 ♗a5, but at the same time the position would acquire an even more unusual character, which is what Botvinnik was trying to avoid.

- |            |               |              |
|------------|---------------|--------------|
| <b>11.</b> | <b>♙g5-d2</b> | ♗a5-b6       |
| <b>12.</b> | <b>a2-a3</b>  | ♙b4-e7       |
| <b>13.</b> | <b>♙d2-e3</b> | <b>g7-g6</b> |
| <b>14.</b> | <b>♘c3-a4</b> | ♗b6-d8       |
| <b>15.</b> | <b>♗d1-d2</b> | ♘h5-g7       |

And again, emphatic rigour! It was perfectly possible to take the pawn 15...♙xh4!? 16.0-0-0 (no good was the risky 16.♙xh4 ♗xh4 17.♙g5 ♗h1 18.♗b4 f6 19.♗xb7 0-0!) 16...♙e7, but in exchange for the worthless h-pawn White has the open and therefore highly-promising h-file. And in general – what was good for Tal couldn't possibly suit Botvinnik.

## 16. ♙e3-g5 h7-h6!

After 16...♘f5 17.♙xe7 ♗xe7 18.h5 White's pieces are a little livelier.



## 17. ♙g5xh6?!

The restrained 17.♙xe7 ♗xe7 18.♙d3 ♘f5 19.♙xf5 gxf5 led to an approximately even but dull position. The rebellious Tal continues to seek a storm, but only finds trouble (this refers to Mikhail Lermontov's 'The Sail', one of the best-known Russian poems).

- |            |               |              |
|------------|---------------|--------------|
| <b>17.</b> | <b>...</b>    | ♘g7-f5       |
| <b>18.</b> | <b>♙h6-f4</b> | ♙h8xh4       |
| <b>19.</b> | <b>♙h1xh4</b> | ♘f5xh4       |
| <b>20.</b> | <b>0-0-0</b>  | <b>b7-b5</b> |

Botvinnik gives in to temptation, but even a slight deviation from the main line is fraught with risk in a battle against Tal. More reliable was 20...♖xf3.

21. ♖a4-c5      ♖d7xc5  
22. d4xc5      ♖e7xc5

22...♖xf3!? 23. ♖c3 ♖h4 is perfectly possible.

23. ♖f1-e2      ♖c5-e7  
24. ♖c1-b1      ♖d8-c7  
25. ♖d1-h1      0-0-0  
26. ♖f4-g3      ♖h4-f5  
27. ♖h1-h7



The impression is that things are bad for White. The 'healthy' extra pawn, without any visible signs of compensation by all the laws of the time, should ensure Black a serious and comfortable advantage. In reality the open h-file and the slightly weakened position of the black king aren't such minor trumps in the hands of the young Tal.

27. ...      ♖d8-f8?!

Played too academically. Stronger and more active was 27...♖c5, intending to place the rook on d7.

28. ♖g3-f4      ♖c7-d8  
29. ♖e2-d3      ♖f8-h8

### 30. ♖h7xh8

White is forced to exchange rooks as it's no good to play 30.♖xf7 ♖e8.

30. ...      ♖d8xh8



### 31. ♖d2-a5!

Oops! Botvinnik did everything correctly and logically, but in defiance of all normal logic the very first active thrust ensures White sufficient counterplay. If the black pawn could return from b5 to b7... But alas, that's something you can only dream about.

31. ...      ♖h8-h1+

There was no longer any way to avoid the draw:

- A) 31...♖b7 32. ♖xb5 cxb5  
33. ♖xb5+ ♖c7 34. ♖d2;  
B) 31...♖b8 32. ♖xf5 (32. ♖xb5? ♖d8) 32...♖h1+ (32...gxf5 33. ♖e3) 33. ♖a2 ♖xf3 34. ♖d2 (34. ♖e3? d4!) 34...gxf5 35. ♖b4 ♖xb4 36. ♖d8+ ♖b7 37. axb4.

32. ♖b1-a2      ♖h1xf3  
33. ♖a5-a6+      ♖c8-b8  
34. ♖a6xc6      ♖f3xf4  
35. ♖d3xb5      ♖f4xe5  
36. ♖c6-e8+      ♖b8-b7  
37. ♖e8-c6+      ♖b7-b8  
1/2-1/2

Once again, by the end of the game the apparently chaotic movement of the white pieces acquired both sense and logic.

Never quite managing to adjust to his opponent's play before the end of the match, Botvinnik conceded his World Championship title.

It seemed as though not only a change of champions had taken place – the emergence of Tal would usher in a new era in chess: the free flight of fancy instead of carefully weighed plans, and improvisation instead of hours of preparation.

However, things didn't turn out to be quite so straightforward. The game really had been significantly altered, becoming more dynamic and spectacular, but the objective, scientific approach to preparation once more proved its validity. Botvinnik analysed the outcome of the lost match with his typical thoroughness, accurately determining the strong and weak points of his opponent. The chess academic's head start in the art of preparation hadn't been challenged in the first match either, but back then the ingenuity and imagination of the young genius was multiplied by colossal energy and ambition.

In the return match Tal turned out to be a mere shadow of himself. He was let down by his health, and his opening baggage turned out to be on the level of the year before, while his limitless faith in himself had turned into careless negligence. Alas, the brilliant theory of a 'fresh head' didn't withstand a serious test. Tal's attacks, when not backed by sufficient energy and accurate calculation, collapsed against the skilfully-constructed defensive bastions of the astute Botvinnik. So the outcome of the

second match was no less deserved than that of the first.

As mentioned before, the World Champions were at the same time trend-setters, and their games would for a long time define the direction in which chess developed. Although Tal spent only a year on the throne, his contribution to the art of chess is hard to overestimate. He literally overturned the common and well-established ideas about many positions, introducing the expression and dynamism the game was lacking. The attitude to preparation also changed. While Botvinnik created rules and elevated them into absolutes, Tal could be described as the embodiment of their rejection. For a certain period of time improvisation and inspiration prevailed in chess, while being systematic and methodical became almost synonymous with a lack of talent. Such a bias hindered even Tal, never mind his less talented followers.

The youngest ex-World Champion, as he liked to call himself, remained in the chess elite for many years, but he was far from successful in ridding himself of all the chess sins of his youth. One of them was an excessive enthusiasm for spectacular but less than fully analysed ideas.

[C93]

**Mikhail Tal**

**Svetozar Gligoric**

Belgrade 1968 (1)

Game 26

- |    |               |               |
|----|---------------|---------------|
| 1. | <b>e2-e4</b>  | <b>e7-e5</b>  |
| 2. | <b>♘g1-f3</b> | <b>♘b8-c6</b> |
| 3. | <b>♙f1-b5</b> | <b>a7-a6</b>  |
| 4. | <b>♙b5-a4</b> | <b>♘g8-f6</b> |
| 5. | <b>0-0</b>    | <b>♙f8-e7</b> |
| 6. | <b>♚f1-e1</b> | <b>b7-b5</b>  |

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 7. ♖a4-b3  | d7-d6  |
| 8. c2-c3   | 0-0    |
| 9. h2-h3   | h7-h6  |
| 10. d2-d4  | ♟f8-e8 |
| 11. ♘b1-d2 | ♙e7-f8 |
| 12. ♘d2-f1 | ♙c8-b7 |
| 13. ♘f1-g3 | ♘c6-a5 |
| 14. ♙b3-c2 | ♘a5-c4 |
| 15. a2-a4  |        |

Along with 15.b3 this is the most popular move in the position. However, 15.♙d3 has also been seen, and was how Tal played in the 9th game of this match.

15. ... d6-d5!?



With the help of a counterstrike in the centre Black attempts to immediately resolve all his problems. In the years that followed such a reaction became standard in many lines of the Ruy Lopez.

### 16. b2-b3

In the game which essentially saw the start of the story of the 15...d5 variation White played differently: 16.exd5 exd4 17.♟xe8 ♜xe8 18.♜xd4 ♙xd5 19.♘h5 ♘xh5 20.♜xd5 ♘f6 Stein-Spassky, Amsterdam (Interzonal) 1964. Black held the position without any particular difficulty, after which the

search for new paths began. For a certain period of time the main topic of discussion was the line found in this game.

16. ... d5xe4  
17. ♘g3xe4 ♘f6xe4



### 18. ♙c2xe4

Amazingly, this natural capture isn't obligatory. Also seen is 18.♟xe4!?:

A) Initially Black didn't react ideally to this novelty: 18...f5?! 19.♟e1 e4 20.bxc4 exf3 21.axb5 ♜f6 (the lesser evil was 21...fxg2 22.bxa6 ♟xa6 23.♟xa6 ♙xa6 although here as well after 24.?5 White's chances are clearly greater) 22.bxa6 ♜g6 23.g4 ♙e4 24.♙e4 fxe4 25.♜a4 h5 26.♜d7 Stein-Reshevsky, Sousse play-off 1967. In this game White didn't manage to convert his large advantage into a full point;

B) 18...♙e4! 19.♙e4 ♘b6 20.♙xa8 ♘xa8 21.axb5 axb5 22.♙e3 (more chances remain after 22.♘xe5! ♟xe5 23.♟xa8 ♜xa8 24.dxe5 although it's extremely hard for White to convert his extra pawn) 22...exd4 23.♘xd4 ♜d5 Stein-Reshevsky, Sousse play-off 1967. White didn't win this game either. It's remarkable how many dramatic confrontations are connected to this variation! As a result Stein didn't

make it into the Candidates' Tournament, instead allowing Reshevsky to qualify. The theoretical duel between Tal and Gligoric also had serious sporting consequences.

18. ... ♖b7xe4  
19. ♖e1xe4 ♜d8-d5  
20. ♖e4-g4!

The only way White can fight for an edge.

20. ... ♜c4-a5  
21. ♙c1xh6 ♜a5xb3



The critical position of the whole variation. Shortly before the Candidates' Match a dress rehearsal took place.

## 22. ♖a1-a3!?

In the USSR-Yugoslavia friendly match, Tal chose the natural 22. ♖b1. After 22...bxa4 (the inclusion of 22...e4 23. ♜h4! only increases White's attacking potential) 23. ♜xe5 f5 24. ♖g3 ♖xe5? (24...c5) 25. dxe5 ♜xe5 (25...♜xd1+!? 26. ♖xd1 a3 27. c4 ♜d4! 28. ♖gd3 ♜c2 29. ♖3d2±) 26. ♜d7 ♜c5 27. ♙xg7! ♙xg7 28. ♖xg7+ ♜xg7 29. ♜d5+ ♜h7 30. ♜xa8 Tal-Gligoric, Budva 1967, White achieved an absolutely won position which he managed, however, not to win. Of course, you couldn't rely on

a repeat of that scenario, especially as the improvement in Black's play was pretty obvious: 24...c5!.

White didn't want to reject this whole variation entirely, however, as it just looks too appealing to have such a battery directed at the black king. If something's impossible but you really want it then you always find a solution. When his seconds proposed the paradoxical 22. ♖a3 the idea fitted perfectly. White's attack develops all by itself, though it's true the analysis wasn't very painstaking – the ex-World Champion was so enthusiastic that he decided to save his efforts and energy for the game.

## 22. ... b5xa4!

It wasn't easy for the Yugoslav grandmaster – he spent around an hour on this move. But the time wasn't spent in vain. Alas, this composed and strong continuation hadn't been seriously considered by Tal's camp, although in the first game this was precisely how Gligoric had reacted to 22. ♖b1. It's understandable that the first thing they'd looked at were the forced variations:

A) 22...♙xa3? 23. ♖xg7+ ♜h8 24. ♜g5 is simply catastrophic for Black;

B) White also has favourable prospects after 22...f5 23. ♖g5! ♜h7 (it's still bad to play 23...♙xa3 24. ♖xg7+ ♜h8 25. ♜h4 ♖e6 26. ♜h5; no good is 23...♖e6 24. ♖xb3 ♖xh6 25. ♖xf5+; it looks very dangerous to play 23...♜c5 24. ♖xf5! gxh6 25. ♜xe5) 24. ♙xg7 ♙xg7 25. ♖xb3;

C) 22...e4!? 23. ♜h4! is less clear, but here as well White is on the attack.

## 23. ♖a3xa4

It seems this wasn't looked at because now the white rook also enters the fray.

23. ...

♖a8-b8!?

Activating a rook in turn, and supporting the b3-knight. Gligoric's desire not to get involved in the dangerous complications after 24...f5 is perfectly understandable, but 24...exd4 is interesting.

24. ♖a4xa6

e5xd4

25. c3xd4

c7-c5

26. ♕h6-e3

♜b8-b4!

27. ♜g4-g5

♞d5-b7

28. ♖a6-h6

There's a well-known saying by Alexander Koblents, the trainer of the Eighth World Champion: 'If Misha has an open line mate will follow!'. Here the black king is being attacked by two rooks, but the outcome of the struggle is totally unclear.

28. ...

♞b3xd4

The inclusion of 28...g6 29.♜h4 ♞xd4 favours Black, but Gligoric couldn't help but be worried about the pure Tal-like 29.♜hxg6+ fxg6 30.♜xg6+ ♕g7 31.dxc5 ♞xc5, after which White calmly plays 32.♖h2 and the final outcome is totally unclear.

29. ♞f3xd4

♜b4-b1

30. ♕e3-c1

♞b7-b2



31. ♞d1-h5?

Up until this point both players were on the top of their game, but now Tal commits a mistake that turns out to be decisive. The intended idea should have been carried out slightly differently: 31.♞b3! ♞xb3 32.♞h5 ♜xc1+ 33.♖h2 ♕d6+ 34.♜xd6 and it's Black who's struggling to survive.

31. ...

♞b2xc1+

32. ♖g1-h2

♕f8-d6+!

A resource which would have been much weaker after 31.♞b3!.

33. ♜h6xd6

♞c1-f4+

34. ♜g5-g3

♞f4xd6

35. ♞d4-f5

♜e8-e1!

36. ♞h5xf7+

♖g8xf7

37. ♞f5xd6+

♖f7-e6

38. ♜g3-g6+

♖e6-d5

39. ♞d6-f5

♜b1-b7

40. ♞f5-e3+?

Missing Black's less than obvious reply. 40.♜g5 was much more stubborn.

40. ...

♜e1xe3!

41. f2xe3

♜b7-c7!

42. ♖h2-g3

c5-c4

43. ♖g3-f4

c4-c3

44. e3-e4+

♞d5-c4

45. ♜g6-a6

c3-c2

46. ♖a6-a1

♖c4-d3

Just as for Stein this variation turned out to be very unlucky for Tal. It goes without saying that losing with white isn't the best way to start a match.

0-1

Soviet chess players continued to dominate the world. Under Tal's influence strict adherence to Botvinnik's doctrines was, for a time, replaced by a



freer and sometimes even bohemian attitude to the game.

Some grandmasters, however, turned out to be immune to fashion. They continued to research calmly and methodically, not lurching from side to side but striving to dig towards the truth. One of those selfless labourers was Efim Geller. Even Botvinnik marvelled at the depth of his analysis, while many opening variations owe their introduction into grandmaster play to Geller.

[B92]

Game 27

**Efim Geller**

**Robert Fischer**

Curaçao ct 1962 (2)

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. e2-e4  | c7-c5  |
| 2. ♘g1-f3 | d7-d6  |
| 3. d2-d4  | c5xd4  |
| 4. ♘f3xd4 | ♘g8-f6 |
| 5. ♘b1-c3 | a7-a6  |
| 6. ♙f1-e2 |        |

This modest bishop move served Geller faithfully for many decades. It was a perfect match for the grandmaster's clear and logical style, and brought him many points. The isolated occasions he switched from his favourite variation, on the contrary, brought him more disappointments.

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 6. ...    | e7-e5  |
| 7. ♘d4-b3 | ♙f8-e7 |
| 8. 0-0    | 0-0    |
| 9. ♙c1-e3 | ♚d8-c7 |

Later people decided it was more accurate to start with 9...♙e6. One of the topical positions in this variation arises after 10.♘d5!? ♘bd7 11.♚d3.

10. a2-a4



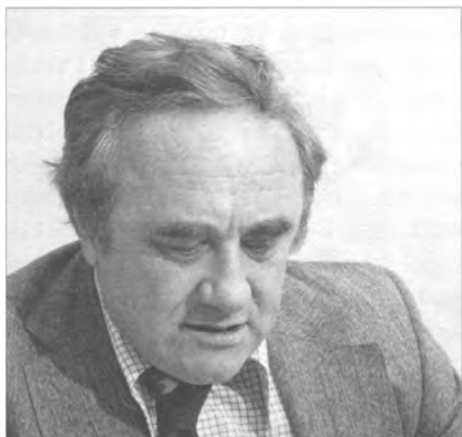
10. ...

♙c8-e6

In the Interzonal in Stockholm that preceded the Candidates' Tournament Geller played three games in this line. 10...b6 11.♚d2 ♙b7 (11...♙e6 12.♚fd1 ♘bd7 13.f3 ♚b7 14.♘c1 ♚fd8 15.♘1a2 ♘c5 16.♘b4 a5 17.♘bd5 Geller-Bolbochan, Stockholm 1962) 12.f3 ♙c6?! (12...♘bd7) 13.♚fd1 ♘bd7 14.♚e1 h6 15.♚f1 ♚b7 16.♙c4 Geller-Fischer, Stockholm 1962; 10...♘bd7 11.a5 b5 12.axb6 ♘xb6 13.♘a5 ♙e6 14.♚d2 ♚fd8 15.♙xb6! ♚xb6 16.♘d5 ♘xd5 17.exd5 ♙d7 18.♚a2 Geller-Stein, Stockholm 1962. Black encountered great difficulties in all of these encounters.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 11. a4-a5  | ♘b8-d7 |
| 12. ♘c3-d5 | ♘f6xd5 |
| 13. e4xd5  | ♙e6-f5 |
| 14. c2-c4  | ♙f5-g6 |
| 15. ♚a1-c1 |        |





Efim Geller

15. ... ♖d7-c5?

Fischer tries to prevent the dangerous c4-c5 advance mechanically, but the dark-square blockade turns out to be untenable. Also in White's favour is 15...f5 16.c5! f4 (16...dxc5 17.♗xc5 ♗xc5 18.b4 f4 19.♗xc5 ♗d6 20.♗g4+-) 17.cxd6 ♗xd6 18.♗c5 ♗xc5 19.♗xc5±, but 15...♗ac8 16.♗d2 f5 was much more stubborn.

16. ♗b3xc5 d6xc5  
17. b2-b4!

After this strong move White's edge becomes obvious.

17. ... ♗a8-c8

17...cxb4 18.♗b6 ♗d7 19.♗b3 with c4-c5 to follow is even worse.

18. ♗d1-b3 ♗e7-d6  
19. ♗f1-d1

Also not bad is 19.bxc5 ♗xc5 20.♗xc5 ♗xc5 21.♗xb7 ♗xa5 22.♗fd1, but the move in the game is stronger.

19. ... ♗c7-e7  
20. b4xc5 ♗d6xc5

21. ♗e3xc5 ♗c8xc5  
22. ♗c1-a1!

Intending to switch the rook along the a1-a4-b4 route. It's hard for Black to counteract this plan.

22. ... ♗f8-d8  
23. ♗a1-a4 ♗g6-f5

23...♗cc8 would temporarily prevent White's plan, but after the correct 24.♗b2! (24.♗b4? ♗c2) 24...♗d7 25.♗b4 essentially nothing has been altered.

23...♗d7 24.♗b4 ♗xa5 25.d6! also couldn't satisfy Black.

24. ♗a4-b4 ♗f5-c8  
25. ♗b4-b6 ♗d8-d6

Perhaps Black should have captured the pawn with 25...♗xa5 but after 26.d6 ♗d7 27.♗c3 ♗c5 28.♗f3 ♗a4 29.♗b4 things would also be tough for Fischer.

26. ♗b3-b4 ♗e7-c7  
27. ♗b6xd6 ♗c7xd6  
28. ♗d1-b1 ♗d6-c7



At first glance it looks as though Black has managed to defend, as the natural 29.♗a1 gives him the time required for consolidation, but an elegant move by the white queen confirms Geller's strategy was correct.

29. ♖b4-a4!      ♙c8-d7  
30. ♖a4-a3      ♜c5xa5

Otherwise 31. ♜b6.

31. ♜b1xb7!

Simpler than 31. ♖e7, which was also fine.

31. ...      ♖c7xb7  
32. ♖a3xa5      g7-g6  
33. h2-h3      ♖b7-b1+  
34. ♔g1-h2?

After 34. ♙f1! White would have won easily, but as sometimes happened in Geller's games, while distracted by global strategic ideas he underestimated his opponent's resources.

34. ...      ♙d7-f5?

Strangely enough Fischer also misses the unexpected escape 34... ♖c2! 35. ♖d8+ (35. ♖e1 a5) 35... ♔g7 36. ♖xd7 ♖xe2 37. ♖c7 a5 38. f4 (38. ♖xa5 ♖xc4) 38... ♖e4 39. fxe5 (39. ♖xe5+? even loses: 39... ♖xe5 40. fxe5 a4) 39... ♖f4+.

35. ♖a5-c3

Now everything falls back into place.

35. ...      ♖b1-e4  
36. ♙e2-f3      ♖e4-d4

It wasn't enough to play 36... ♖d3 37. ♖xd3 ♙xd3 38. c5 ♔f8 39. d6 ♔e8 40. ♙c6+ ♔d8 41. ♔g3.

37. ♖c3xd4      e5xd4  
38. g2-g4      ♙f5-c8  
39. c4-c5      a6-a5  
40. c5-c6      ♔g8-f8  
41. d5-d6

Here the game was adjourned, but Fischer resigned without playing it out due to the simple lines:



A) 41... a4 42. c7 a3 43. ♙c6 a2 44. d7 ♙xd7 45. ♙xd7 a1 ♖ 46. c8 ♖++-;

B) 41... ♔e8 42. ♙d1 ♙a6 43. g5 ♙b5 (43... ♔d8 44. ♙g4) 44. c7 ♙d7 45. ♙a4+-.

Lev Polugaevsky worked on chess even more enthusiastically. His fate was unusual for a great chess player, although he undoubtedly was one. A modest and guileless provincial man, Lev spent a long time in the shadow of his contemporaries – Kortchnoi, Tal, and Spassky. While they were already famous grandmasters he was only creeping towards the title at the cost of enormous effort.

It's always dangerous to compare the scale of natural talent, but in terms of the vividness of his talent he was undoubtedly inferior to Spassky and Tal. The ferocious fighting spirit and uncompromising attitude of Kortchnoi were also things that Lev could only admire. What for his colleagues came simply and easily took Polugaevsky an incredible amount of work, though whenever he reached a new mark he never dropped back. In 1967 sharing first place in the USSR Championship was seen as a great achievement for Polugaevsky, but similar success in the next two Championships no longer amazed anybody.

For many years Polugaevsky's sporting qualities were also far from those of a

champion. An inborn lack of self-confidence and extreme sensitivity prevented Lev from displaying his full mastery at the decisive moments. As a result, it took him a long time to cross the Interzonal barrier. He first managed that in 1973 when he was almost forty. After winning a decisive game against Lajos Portisch (you can find it in the deciding games chapter), he qualified for a match-tournament play-off. He overcame that obstacle as well and then twice more qualified for the Candidates. What came naturally to the great fighters was something he managed to acquire with the help of merciless self-analysis and unrelenting work on himself. His path to the top ended up being much longer and more painful, but that made his experience all the more precious. As for pure chess, Polugaevsky has had few rivals in the history of chess in terms of the depth of his research and the detail and accuracy of his analysis. In that regard his game against Tal is very revealing.

**[D41]**  
**Lev Polugaevsky**  
**Mikhail Tal**

Game 28

Moscow ch-URS 1969 (2)

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 1. c2-c4   | ♟g8-f6  |
| 2. ♞b1-c3  | e7-e6   |
| 3. ♞g1-f3  | d7-d5   |
| 4. d2-d4   | c7-c5   |
| 5. c4xd5   | ♞f6xd5  |
| 6. e2-e4   | ♞d5xc3  |
| 7. b2xc3   | c5xd4   |
| 8. c3xd4   | ♞f8-b4+ |
| 9. ♞c1-d2  | ♞b4xd2+ |
| 10. ♜d1xd2 | 0-0     |
| 11. ♞f1-c4 | ♞b8-c6  |
| 12. 0-0    | b7-b6   |

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 13. ♞a1-d1 | ♞c8-b7 |
| 14. ♞f1-e1 | ♞c6-a5 |

14...♞e7 15.d5 exd5 16.exd5 ♞f5 17.♞e5! ♞d6 18.♞c6! ♞xc6 19.dxc6 ♞xc4 20.♜f4 ♞d6 21.♞xd6 with a big edge for White, was seen in the game Petrosian-Kortchnoi, Il Ciocco m-6 1977;

14...♞c8 15.d5 exd5 (15...♞a5 16.♞d3! exd5 17.e5 led, by a move transposition, to the game we're looking at) 16.♞xd5 ♞a5?! (it was worth considering 16...♜c7 17.♜g5 h6 18.♜g4 ♞e7) 17.♜f4 ♜c7 18.♜f5 brought Spassky a win over Petrosian (Moscow m-5 1969). That's far from a coincidence. The whole variation was analysed in detail by Spassky and Polugaevsky during their training camp in Dubna. Petrosian deviates from the main variation and Tal falls right into the trap.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 15. ♞c4-d3 | ♞a8-c8 |
|------------|--------|



- |            |       |
|------------|-------|
| 16. d4-d5! | e6xd5 |
|------------|-------|

After this game it was up to Black to look for an antidote. One of the possible attempts was 16...♜d6!? 17.dxe6 (17.♜e2 e5) 17...fxe6 (17...♜xe6 18.♞d4 ♜e5 19.♞f5 is dangerous for Black) but after 18.♜g5 ♜c5 19.♜h4 White has attacking chances.

**17. e4-e5!      ♖a5-c4**

The most natural reaction. After other continuations White's initiative also gives full compensation for the sacrificed pawn. For example: 17...♔e7 18.♔f4 ♖c4 19.♖g5 g6 20.♔h4 h5 21.♙f5! ♜ce8 22.e6 or 17...h6 18.♙f5 ♜c7 19.e6.

**18. ♔d2-f4      ♖c4-b2?**



It seems as though Black has resolved all his problems, as after the natural 19.♙d2 ♖xd3 White doesn't have sufficient compensation for the pawn. However, Polugaevsky's preparation turned out to be much deeper and it was already problematic to find a satisfactory defence. Insufficient was 18...h6 19.♔f5 g6 20.♔h3 (20.♔g4 h5 21.♔g3 is also interesting) 20...♙g7 21.e6 ♔f6! (21...fxe6? 22.♖d4+-) because of 22.exf7 ♔xf7 23.♙xg6! ♔xg6 24.♙e7+ ♙f7 25.♙xb7 ♙xb7 26.♔xc8±. Better is 22...♙c6, but in that case as well White's chances are greater.

**19. ♙d3xh7+!      ♔g8xh7  
20. ♖f3-g5+      ♔h7-g6**

The impression is that White's attack has hit a dead-end. A piece has been sacrificed, two more are hanging and no direct threats are visible.



**21. h2-h4!!**

This game is given in all the books as an example of Polugaevsky's brilliant home preparation – and that's absolutely just. An additional argument in favour of such a conclusion is the evidence of Genna Sosonko, Tal's second. It turns out they also reached this position in their analysis. They didn't miss the piece sacrifice either, but they dismissed it on general considerations: at first glance the build up of attacking forces was just too small. However, in the position where the ex-World Champion ended his analysis Polugaevsky had just begun! The move in the game wouldn't even deserve a single exclamation mark if it wasn't a link in the chain of an idea that was flawlessly worked out in all regards.

**21. ...      ♜c8-c4**

After a long think Tal chose the most logical defence. It's no surprise that it coincided with the main line of the home analysis. A good illustration of the dangers awaiting Black in other lines is given by the following variations:

A) 21...♖xd1 22.h5+ ♔h6 (22...♔xh5 23.g4+ ♔g6 24.♔f5+ ♔h6 25.♔h7+ ♔xg5 26.♔h5+ ♔f4 27.♔f5 mate) 23.♖e6+ ♔h7 24.♖xd8 ♜cx d8 25.♙xd1+-;

B) 21...f5 22.♖d4! with the same idea of 23.h5+. Apart from that Black has to take 23.♗g3 and 23.♕e3 into account;

C) 21...♗e7 22.♖d4! ♖h6 23.♘e4+ ♖h7 24.♘f6+! gxf6 25.♗f5+ ♖h6 26.exf6 ♗xe1+ 27.♖h2 ♖g8 28.g4 and Black is helpless.

22. h4-h5+! ♖g6-h6  
23. ♘g5xf7+ ♖h6-h7  
24. ♗f4-f5+ ♖h7-g8  
25. e5-e6!+—



Believe it or not, this position had also been considered by Polugaevsky during his preparation for the game – a witness to that was Grandmaster Geller, who happened to glance into his colleague's room. Imagine his surprise when the next day he actually saw it in a real game.

25. ... ♗d8-f6!

The only defence. Losing rapidly were both 25...♗e7 26.h6! and 25...♘xd1 26.e7 ♗e8 27.exf8♗+ ♗xf8 28.♘h6+! gxf6 29.♗g6+ ♖h8 30.♕e8.

26. ♗f5xf6 g7xf6  
27. ♖d1-d2!

The apparently very strong 27.♘d6 is a false trail: 27...♘xd1 28.e7 ♖c1! and

Black survives. At the board Polugaevsky didn't see this defence, but there's a higher justice in the fact that he intuitively chose the correct continuation..

27. ... ♖c4-c6!  
28. ♖d2xb2 ♖f8-e8?!

In time trouble Black misses a chance to put up a more stubborn defence: 28...♖c8, after which his opponent would have to play accurately: 29.♘h6+! (29.e7? ♕e8 30.♘d8 ♖c7 31.♖be2 d4 32.♖d2 ♖cxe7 33.♖xe7 ♖xe7 34.♖xd4 ♖d7 would give Black real chances of surviving) 29...♖h7 30.♘f5 ♖xe6 31.♖c1!±.

29. ♘f7-h6+ ♖g8-h7  
30. ♘h6-f5 ♖e8xe6  
31. ♖e1xe6 ♖c6xe6  
32. ♖b2-c2 ♖e6-c6  
33. ♖c2-e2 ♖b7-c8

Little better was 33...♖c7 34.♖e6! d4 35.♖xf6 d3 36.♖h6+ ♖g8 37.♖d6 ♖e4 38.♘e3 and White wins.

34. ♖e2-e7+ ♖h7-h8

34...♖g8 would only have slightly complicated White's task. The following line is easy to find at the board: 35.♘h4! ♖c1+ 36.♖h2 ♖c4 37.f4 ♖xf4 38.♘g6 ♖f5 39.g4 ♖g5 40.♖e8+ ♖g7 41.♖xc8 ♖xg4 42.♖h3 ♖a4 43.♖g3 ♖xa2 44.♘f4+—.

35. ♘f5-h4! f6-f5  
36. ♘h4-g6+ ♖h8-g8  
37. ♖e7xa7 1-0

Polugaevsky was unquestionably a follower of Botvinnik's scientific approach to chess. It's symbolic, then, that one of the most striking examples of his profound insight into the mysteries of a



Lev Polugaevsky

position was a stunning novelty in the Botvinnik Variation.

[D44]

Lev Polugaevsky  
Eugenio Torre

Moscow 1981 (6)

Game 29

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4   | d7-d5  |
| 2. c2-c4   | c7-c6  |
| 3. ♘g1-f3  | ♘g8-f6 |
| 4. ♘b1-c3  | e7-e6  |
| 5. ♙c1-g5  | d5xc4  |
| 6. e2-e4   | b7-b5  |
| 7. e4-e5   | h7-h6  |
| 8. ♙g5-h4  | g7-g5  |
| 9. ♘f3xg5  | h6xg5  |
| 10. ♙h4xg5 | ♘b8-d7 |
| 11. e5xf6  | ♙c8-b7 |
| 12. g2-g3  | c6-c5  |
| 13. d4-d5  |        |

'At the risk of losing precious time I spent around half a month during the preparation for the match against Mecking (1977) analysing the tabiya of the Botvinnik Variation. The risk proved justified. One sleepless night, totally absorbed by work, I literally shuddered: as if catching a firebird by the tail I'd

grasped an absolutely new idea. In the match it wasn't needed, and the sheet of paper with the notes lay around for more than four years!' Polugaevsky's words partly explain the nature of his opening discoveries.

13. ... ♘d7-b6?!

On the basis of this game this move, that had up until then been considered almost the main line, was discarded (it can't be ruled out that it's only until better times). As for other continuations in this position, then that's a theme for special monographs.

14. d5xe6! ♙d8xd1+

14...♙xh1 15.e7 ♙d7 (15...♙xd1+ 16.♙xd1 leads to the position in the game) 16.♙xd7+ ♘xd7 17.♘xb5 ♙xe7 18.fxe7 f6 19.♙f4 clearly favours White.

15. ♙a1xd1 ♙b7xh1

16. e6-e7



16. ... a7-a6

A possible rehabilitation of this variation is connected to 16...♙c6!? 17.♙d6:

A) Losing is 17...♙c8 18.h4 ♙h6 19.f4 ♘d7 20.♙h3 ♙c7 21.♘d5 ♙xd5 22.♙xd5;

B) 17...♙d7 18.♘e4! ♙f5 (18...♙g8 19.♙d5! ♙xe7 20.♙e5) 19.♘xc5 is also inadvisable;

C) 17...b4! Only like this! 18.♖xc6 bxc3 19.bxc3 ♕h6 20.♕h4. Contrary to the game White doesn't manage to set up a pawn chain with h4 and f4, while with a working bishop on h6 Black's prospects aren't so bad: 20...♖d7 21.♖xc5 ♕f4 with good chances of survival.

### 17. h2-h4!!

The position arising after 17.exf8♖+ ♖xf8! 18.♖d6 ♖b8 19.♕e3 ♖h5 20.♕e2 ♖e5 was successfully defended by Polugaevsky's long-term trainer Bagirov against Plachetka (Berlin 1979) and Beliavsky (Moscow 1981).

17. ... ♕f8-h6  
18. f2-f4!

Now Black's king's rook is forced to remain confined, the e7-pawn ties down the king, and spirit overcomes matter.

18. ... b5-b4



Passive defence is totally unpromising: 18...♕xg5 19.fxg5 ♖b8 20.♖d6! ♕a8 21.♕h3 – Black is absolutely helpless.

### 19. ♖d1-d6!

The MF confidently gives this move as the best... in the struggle for a draw! It makes a useless guide in such positions. The human genius embodied by Polugaevsky, however, not only discovered a fantastic

idea inaccessible to any program, but also polished it with computer-like precision.

19. ... ♖a8-b8!

Also of little help is 19...bxc3 20.♖xb6 cxb2 (20...c2 21.♖d2 ♖d7 22.♕xc4 ♕e4 23.♖xa6!+–) 21.♕xc4± ♕c6 22.♖xb2 a5 23.♖b5! ♖c8 24.♖xa5. In all variations Black's material edge turns out to be an illusion, as the h8-rook never does get involved in the struggle.

20. ♖c3-d1 ♕h6xg5

For 20...♕e4 Kasparov gives the following beautiful variation: 21.♖e3 c3 22.♕xa6 ♖d7 23.♖c4 cxb2 24.♖xb2 ♕b1 25.♖d1 ♕xa2 26.♕c4 b3 27.♕b5! ♖xb5 28.♖c4 with inevitable mate.

21. f4xg5 ♖b6-d5!

Losing is 21...♕d5 22.♖e3 ♕e6 23.♕g2 ♕d7 24.♕c6! (stronger and more beautiful than the 24.♕e4± indicated by Polugaevsky) 24...♕xc6 25.♖f5! ♕g8 26.♖g7+ ♖xg7 27.♖d8+ ♖xd8 28.exd8♖+ ♖xd8 29.fxg7. However, isolated inaccuracies in the analysis only underline the human nature of this great idea.

22. ♕f1xc4 ♖d5xe7  
23. f6xe7 ♖e8xe7



24. ♖d6-f6!



Domination is more important than pawns. 24. ♖xa6 ♜he8! 25. ♜f6 ♔f8+ gave Black chances of survival.

24. ... ♜h8-f8  
25. ♔d1-e3 ♔h1-e4  
26. ♜f6xa6

Black has escaped from White's clutches, but at a high cost. Now White doesn't only have a positional advantage, but also a material one.

26. ... ♜b8-d8  
27. ♜a6-f6! ♜d8-d6  
28. ♜f6-f4 ♜d6-d4  
29. h4-h5 ♔e4-d3!  
30. ♔e3-d5+!

Polugaevsky claimed his home analysis had stretched right up until this position. It's hard even to imagine such a thing!

30. ... ♔e7-d6  
31. ♜f4xd4 c5xd4  
32. ♔c4-b3?!

When everything had essentially already been done, hard-to-explain errors crept in. There was a simple win with 32. ♔xd3 ♔xd5 33. h6 ♜g8 34. h7 ♜h8 35. ♔d2 – also fine is the straightforward 35. a4.

32. ... ♔d3-c2!  
33. ♔b3xc2 ♔d6xd5



34. ♔c2-b3+?

A mistake provoked, it seems, by some kind of hallucination. There was still an easy win after 34. h6, or the equally good 34. ♔d2.

34. ... ♔d5-e5  
35. g3-g4 ♔e5-f4?

Black's blunder, however, is easy to explain: fatigue after an extremely tough defence combined with time trouble. The draw could have been achieved with surprising ease: 35...d3! 36. g6 fxg6 37. hxg6 ♔f6 38. ♔d2 (38. ♔f7 ♜c8) 38...♜d8 39. ♔f7 ♜d4. Now, however, everything is again over:

36. g5-g6 ♔f4-e3

36...fxg6 37. hxg6 ♜e8+ 38. ♔d2 ♜e7 39. ♔f7.

37. g6-g7 ♜f8-c8  
38. ♔e1-f1 d4-d3  
39. ♔f1-g2 ♔e3-f4  
40. h5-h6 1-0

Polugaevsky's idea makes a momentous impression. Everything about it, from the paradoxical idea to the accurately checked variations, is flawless.

The appearance of Fischer upset the positive picture of the total superiority of the SCO. The situation was complicated by the fact that the upstart was an American. In the 60s and 70s the ideological confrontation between the USSR and the USA had become extremely sharp, so the issue of competing with Fischer went far beyond the bounds of chess. In the 1971 Candidates Cycle Tigran Petrosian ended up as the SCO's last barrier on Fischer's path to Spassky. As early as the first game of the final match of the Candidates the

ex-World Champion revealed a secret weapon – the fruit of the collective creativity of his coaching staff.

[B33]

Game 30

**Robert Fischer**  
**Tigran Petrosian**

Buenos Aires m 1971 (1)

The psychological situation before the start of the final match of the Candidates clearly wasn't in the ex-World Champion's favour. His fierce opponent had scored 18 wins in a row and seemed unstoppable. It was extremely important to hold as Black, so the choice of opening, one far from Petrosian's main weapon, was a surprise.

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. e2-e4  | c7-c5  |
| 2. ♘g1-f3 | e7-e6  |
| 3. d2-d4  | c5xd4  |
| 4. ♘f3xd4 | ♘b8-c6 |
| 5. ♘d4-b5 | d7-d6  |
| 6. ♙c1-f4 | e6-e5  |
| 7. ♙f4-e3 | ♘g8-f6 |
| 8. ♙e3-g5 | ♙c8-e6 |
| 9. ♘b1-c3 |        |

Nowadays White plays more cautiously:  
9. ♙xf6 gxf6 10. ♘d2.

- |              |       |
|--------------|-------|
| 9. ...       | a7-a6 |
| 10. ♙g5xf6?! |       |

At the time the Chelyabinsk Variation was only taking its first tentative steps towards recognition, so a whole class of similar positions was evaluated as clearly in White's favour. A compromised pawn structure and solid control over the d5-point – what more could you ask for? Besides, after 10. ♘a3 ♙e7 (10...d5 11.exd5 ♙xa3 12.bxa3 ♚a5 13.dxe6 ♚xc3+ 14.♙d2 ♚c5 15.exf7+ isn't so strong in this particular situation) 11. ♘c4 ♘d4 Black has no problems.

- |            |       |
|------------|-------|
| 10. ...    | g7xf6 |
| 11. ♘b5-a3 |       |



- |         |        |
|---------|--------|
| 11. ... | d6-d5! |
|---------|--------|

And here's the bomb specially prepared for Fischer! It becomes clear what Petrosian was counting on when he chose the Sicilian Defence. In general, such an approach comes with no small amount of risk: after all, your opponent might deviate from the main line, and then you'll have to play on his territory, as it's impossible to get to know all the nuances of a new opening. But in Fischer's case such a risk was minimal – the American believed in his opening systems and very rarely changed them. He only became more flexible in the match against Spassky – perhaps under the influence of the opening surprises the Russians sprung on him!?

A) 11... ♘d4 12. ♘c4 (12. ♙c4 d5) 12...f5 13.exf5 ♘xf5 14. ♙d3 ♚c8 (14... ♘d4) 15. ♙xf5 ♚xc4 16. ♙xe6 fxe6 17. ♚e2 was encountered in the 6th match game Fischer-Taimanov, Vancouver 1971;

B) 11... ♘e7 12. ♘c4 d5 13.exd5 ♘xd5 14. ♘xd5 ♙xd5 15. ♘e3 ♙c6 16. ♙c4 ♚xd1+ 17. ♚xd1 ♚c8 18. ♙d5 (Karpov-Taimanov, USSR Championship, Leningrad 1971) would probably have suited White.

## 12. e4xd5

Played instantly. 12. ♖xd5 ♙xa3 (also not bad is 12... ♖a5+ 13. ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 14. ♖xd2 0-0-0 15. c4 f5 16. f3 fxe4 17. fxe4 f5 18. exf5 ♙xd5 19. cxd5 ♗xd5+ with more than enough compensation for the pawn) 13. bxa3 f5 favours Black.

12. ...	♙f8xa3
13. b2xa3	♗d8-a5
14. ♗d1-d2	0-0-0

It was only here that Fischer started to think. It's only possible to guess what exactly he'd missed during his preparation. It's quite likely that 11...d5! already came as a surprise to him, but that he had few doubts about the previous almost forced moves. However, here as well White doesn't have a pleasant choice.

## 15. ♙f1-c4

15. ♖d1 (everything else is even worse) 15... ♙xd5 16. ♖xd5 ♗xd5 17. ♗xa5 ♗xa5 18. ♙c4 ♖d4 19. ♖d2 ♗xa3 20. ♙xf7 ♗f8 21. ♙b3 ♗d8 leads to an unpleasant ending for White.



15. ... ♗h8-g8!

Both this move and the whole variation had been researched in detail by the

Moldovan chess player Viacheslav Chebanenko, and his notebook with analysis was handed to Petrosian immediately after he won his semifinal match against Kortchnoi. Revolutionary ideas usually hang in the air. In parallel to Chebanenko the idea of 11...d5 had also occurred to Lev Polugaevsky, but he didn't share it with anyone. The honour of being the pioneer fell to the ex-World Champion, but knowing the result of the game it's hard to describe him as lucky. Polugaevsky, by the way, preferred 15... ♖b8.

16. ♗a1-d1! ♙e6-f5?!

After half an hour of thought Petrosian rejected 16... ♗xg2!, which had been analysed by Chebanenko and checked



Tigran Petrosian

before the game. Yet another psychological puzzle, which both the player himself and his assistants had trouble answering. It was by no means a matter of finding 'holes' in his home analysis at the board, which isn't so uncommon. It seems that right from the start Petrosian was uncomfortable with this complex double-edged position, but af-

ter going along with his seconds he then during the game chose what seemed to him to be a less risky path. His decision actually had only an indirect relation to chess.

An idea of how the battle would have gone after 16...♖xg2! is given by the lines: 17.♘e4 (probably the strongest move) 17...♚b6 18.♚e3 ♚xe3+ (the simplest and most reliable continuation. There are more confusing positions after 18...♘d4!? 19.♙f1! ♙g4 20.♙xg2 ♙f3+ 21.♚xf3 ♘xf3 22.♙xf3 f5 23.♘d2! (weaker is 23.♘g3? ♚g6 24.h3 e4+ 25.♙e2 f4 26.♘f1 e3 27.♙d3 ♚h5+ 28.f3 ♖xd5 with an obvious edge for Black) 23...e4+ 24.♙e2 ♚c5) 19.fxe3 ♙g4 20.♖d2 ♙f3 21.♖xg2 ♙xg2 22.♖g1 ♙xe4 23.dxc6 bxc6 24.♙xa6+ ♙c7 and White has to struggle to draw.

Also of interest is 16...♘e7!? 17.♘e4 ♚c7! (even stronger than 17...♚xd2+ 18.♖xd2 ♘xd5 or 18...♙xd5 19.♙xd5 ♘xd5 20.g3 f5 21.c4) 18.♚c3 ♙xd5 19.♙xd5 ♘xd5 20.♚xc7+ ♙xc7 with the same comfortable advantage Black was dreaming of.

### 17. ♙c4-d3! ♙f5xd3

And again Black overlooks an active continuation: 17...e4! 18.♘xe4 ♚xd5 (18...♙xe4 19.dxc6 ♚e5! 20.♚e3 ♙xc6 21.♚xe5 fxe5 22.♙f5+ ♙c7 23.♖xd8 ♙xd8 was sufficient for a draw) 19.f3 ♙xe4 20.fxe4 ♚c5, although after 21.♚f2 ♚a5+ 22.♖d2 White should hold the position.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 18. ♚d2xd3 | ♘c6-d4 |
| 19. 0-0    | ♙c8-b8 |
| 20. ♙g1-h1 | ♚a5xa3 |
| 21. f2-f4  | ♖d8-c8 |
| 22. ♘c3-e4 |        |



### 22. ... ♚a3xd3

Interesting, though absolutely inconsistent would be 22...♚xa2!? 23.♖f2 (23.♖d2!? ♖xc2 24.♖xc2 ♘xc2 25.♚e2 exf4 26.♘xf6 ♖d8=) 23...♖xc2 24.♖xc2 ♚xc2 (24...♘xc2 25.♚d2 is weaker) 25.♚xc2 ♘xc2 26.♘xf6 ♖xg2 27.♙xg2 ♘e3+ 28.♙f3 ♘xd1 29.fxe5 ♙c7. After consciously avoiding favourable complications it's illogical to head for unpredictable ones.

### 23. c2xd3

Fischer, on the other hand, exploits any chance to continue the struggle. 23.♖xd3 ♖xc2 24.g3 ♖xa2 (24...♙g6!?) 25.♘xf6 ♖c8 26.fxe5 ♖cc2 27.♘g4 h5 28.♘f2 ♖xf2 29.♖xf2 ♖xf2 30.♖xd4 b5 would only have created problems for White.

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 23. ...    | ♖c8-c2  |
| 24. ♖d1-d2 | ♖c2xd2  |
| 25. ♘e4xd2 | f6-f5!? |

Here the desire to avoid complications is perfectly understandable. The position arising after 25...♖d8 26.♘e4 ♖xd5 27.♘xf6 ♖a5 28.fxe5 favours White.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 26. f4xe5  | ♖g8-e8 |
| 27. ♖f1-e1 | ♘d4-c2 |
| 28. ♖e1-e2 | ♘c2-d4 |

29. ♖e2-e3      ♘d4-c2  
 30. ♖e3-h3      ♖e8xe5  
 31. ♘d2-f3      ♖e5xd5  
 32. ♖h3xh7      ♖d5xd3  
 33. h2-h4      ♘c2-e3

It was easier to make a draw with  
 33...♘d4 34.♘xd4 ♖xd4 35.h5 ♖h4+  
 36.♔g1 f4 37.♔f2 ♔a7 38.♔f3 f5.

34. ♖h7xf7      ♖d3-d1+

Everyone blunders in time trouble!  
 34...♔c8 with the idea of 35.♔h2 ♖d7!  
 or 35.h5 ♖d1+! 36.♔h2 ♖d7! was the  
 correct defence.

35. ♔h1-h2      ♖d1-a1  
 36. h4-h5      f5-f4?

An impulsive and purely time-trouble  
 move that deprives Black of his last  
 hopes. 36...♖xa2 37.♖g7 (37.♘h4!?  
 ♖a5! 38.♔h3 ♖a1 39.♘xf5 ♖h1+  
 40.♔g3 ♘xf5+ 41.♖xf5 b5 would also  
 apparently have led to a draw) 37...♖a5!!  
 leads to a draw according to Kasparov's  
 analysis. However, that's beyond the ca-  
 pabilities of a player (even a great one)  
 who finds himself in terrible time trou-  
 ble. The analysis of this instructive end-  
 ing is beyond the bounds of our topic,  
 so we'll trust the author of MGP.

37. ♖f7xf4      ♖a1xa2



38. ♖f4-e4!

Also winning was 38.♔h3 ♘xg2  
 39.♖f8+ ♔c7 40.h6 but Fischer finds a  
 simpler and more elegant path.

38. ...      ♘e3xg2

38...♘f5 39.♖e5.

39. ♔h2-g3      ♖a2-a5  
 40. ♘f3-e5      1-0

The course of this encounter demon-  
 strated once more that the effectiveness  
 of an opening novelty, besides its objec-  
 tive value, to a large degree depends on  
 the time and place it's played. An op-  
 ening repertoire should, as far as possi-  
 ble, correspond to the creative person-  
 ality of the chess player, but in the given  
 situation Petrosian was clearly unpre-  
 pared for the character of the sharp  
 positions that arose.

Neither Petrosian nor Spassky managed  
 to stop Fischer, but a representative of  
 the new generation of Soviet chess play-  
 ers came to the fore. He possessed huge  
 talent and strength of character out of  
 keeping with his age. All the SCO's  
 hopes in the struggle against the fear-  
 some American were now connected to  
 the name of Anatoly Karpov. All avail-  
 able resources were thrown into prepa-  
 ration for the upcoming match.

We can only speculate about the possi-  
 ble outcome of that encounter which  
 never took place, but what neither  
 Fischer's opponents nor the powerful  
 SCO had managed the American ac-  
 complished all by himself. He quit  
 chess without ever having made a sin-  
 gle move as World Champion. Fortu-  
 nately for the new champion, however,  
 the colossal resources that had been ac-

cumulated in the preparation process weren't in vain. Both the huge coaching staff and the opening ideas amassed came in handy in the struggle against the new ideological enemy – Viktor Kortchnoi. One of Karpov's seconds – Igor Zaitsev – switched to him from Petrosian's camp. It was Zaitsev who provided the most unexpected and brilliant ideas.

[C80]

Game 31

**Anatoly Karpov**  
**Viktor Kortchnoi**

Baguio City Wch-m 1978 (10)

- |              |        |
|--------------|--------|
| 1. e2-e4     | e7-e5  |
| 2. ♖g1-f3    | ♟b8-c6 |
| 3. ♙f1-b5    | a7-a6  |
| 4. ♙b5-a4    | ♟g8-f6 |
| 5. 0-0       | ♟f6xe4 |
| 6. d2-d4     | b7-b5  |
| 7. ♙a4-b3    | d7-d5  |
| 8. d4xe5     | ♙c8-e6 |
| 9. ♟b1-d2    | ♟e4-c5 |
| 10. c2-c3    | d5-d4  |
| 11. ♟f3-g5!? |        |



According to Karpov, 'this rarest of piece sacrifices arose in the 'fevered brain' of my trainer (Igor Zaitsev) a few months before the start of the match'. It's remarkable not only for the creator's imagination. The most stunning thing is that



**Anatoly Karpov**

a final verdict on Zaitsev's brilliant idea has yet to be reached, despite over 30 years now having passed! Of course, this wonderful move deserves more than the 'objective' (!?) given to it now as a result of many years of investigation.

You can imagine the state Kortchnoi was in when he was forced to resolve the most complex of tasks directly at the board.

11. ...

**d4xc3**

From a practical point of view this is the best decision, but it came at the cost of 45 minutes. Subsequently tried at the very highest level were both 11... ♖xg5!? 12. ♖f3 0-0-0 13. ♙xe6+ fxe6 14. ♖xc6 ♖xe5 and 11... ♙d5 12. ♟xf7! ♟xf7 13. ♖f3+ ♟e6 14. ♖g4+ ♟e7 15. e6! but it's impossible to embark on such escapades without detailed analysis. Kortchnoi's feelings in this game can probably be compared to those of a sapper tackling a minefield. One false step...

12. ♟g5xe6

**f7xe6**

13. b2xc3

**♖d8-d3**



#### 14. ♖d2-f3

White settles for a slight advantage which doesn't, however, suffice for victory. The logic of the position demanded more decisive actions: 14. ♖c2! ♜xc3 15. ♖b3!! ♜xb3 16. ♖xb3 ♖d4 17. ♜g4! (the MF's suggestion of the miserable 17. ♜b1 is simply insulting in such a position!) 17... ♜xa1 18. ♖xe6 ♜d8 19. ♖h6!! occurred in the 10th match game Kasparov-Anand, New York Wch 1995.

The next puzzle is that the whole idea of 14. ♖c2 had been suggested by Tal back in Baguio. Perhaps the grand idea that Kasparov implemented many years later hadn't yet been fully formulated, or the World Champion decided there'd been enough surprises for one game. In any case, Black managed to hold that game..

#### 14. ... ♜d3xd1

For mysterious (to the author) reasons Kasparov also didn't immediately decide on 14. ♖c2!. In the 6th game of the New York match he also played 14. ♖f3. The first to deviate was Anand: 14... 0-0-0!? 15. ♜e1!? ♜xb3 16. axb3 ♜b7 and White didn't manage to convert his minimal edge.

#### 15. ♖b3xd1

Relying on the bishop pair. Little was promised by 15. ♜xd1 ♜xb3 16. axb3 ♖c5.

#### 15. ... ♖f8-e7 16. ♖c1-e3 ♖c5-d3!?

16... 0-0 17. ♖c2.

#### 17. ♖d1-b3

It looked more promising to play 17. ♖c2! ♜cxe5 (after 17... 0-0-0 18. a4! ♜dxe5 19. ♖xe5 ♜xe5 20. axb5 axb5 21. ♜a6 ♖d6 22. ♖e4 White also has wonderful compensation for the pawn) 18. ♖xe5 ♜xe5 19. ♖d4. Black would have to fight for a draw.

#### 17. ... ♜e8-f7 18. ♜a1-d1 ♜d3xe5 19. ♖f3xe5+ ♜c6xe5 20. ♖e3-f4



#### 20. ... ♜e5-c4!

Excessive greed could also lead to difficulties here: 20... ♖d6 21. ♜fe1 ♜f6 22. ♜e4.

#### 21. ♖b3xc4 b5xc4 22. ♜d1-d4 ♖e7-d6! 23. ♖f4-e3

23. ♖xd6 cxd6 24. ♜xd6 ♜hd8 would lead to a quick draw.

#### 23. ... ♜h8-b8

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 24. ♖d4xc4 | ♜b8-b2  |
| 25. a2-a4  | ♜b2-a2  |
| 26. g2-g3  | ♜a8-b8  |
| 27. ♖f1-d1 | ♜b8-b2  |
| 28. ♖d1-d4 | ♜b2-b1+ |
| 29. ♔g1-g2 | ♜b1-a1  |
| 30. ♖d4-h4 | h7-h6   |
| 31. ♙e3-c5 | e6-e5   |
| 32. ♙c5-a7 | ♚f7-e6  |
| 33. ♜c4-g4 | ♙d6-e7  |
| 34. ♜h4-h5 | ♙e7-f6  |
| 35. ♜g4-c4 |         |



35. ... ♚e6-d7

And now 35...♚d6! would actually have posed White certain problems, as after 36.♙b8 ♙d8 the e5-pawn is defended.

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 36. ♙a7-b8 | c7-c6   |
| 37. ♜c4-e4 | ♜a2xa4  |
| 38. c3-c4  | ♜a4-a5  |
| 39. ♙b8xe5 | ♙f6xe5  |
| 40. ♜h5xe5 | ♜a5xe5  |
| 41. ♜e4xe5 | ♜a1-a4  |
| 42. ♜e5-e4 | ♜a4-a5  |
| 43. h2-h4  | h6-h5   |
| 44. ♜e4-f4 | 1/2-1/2 |

In this game Kortchnoi miraculously managed to escape the lethal danger. The torpedoes of the collective work of the SCO hit him three years later.

[C80] Game 32  
**Anatoly Karpov**  
**Viktor Kortchnoi**  
 Merano Wch-m 1981 (18)

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 1. e2-e4   | e7-e5  |
| 2. ♘g1-f3  | ♘b8-c6 |
| 3. ♙f1-b5  | a7-a6  |
| 4. ♙b5-a4  | ♘g8-f6 |
| 5. 0-0     | ♘f6xe4 |
| 6. d2-d4   | b7-b5  |
| 7. ♙a4-b3  | d7-d5  |
| 8. d4xe5   | ♙c8-e6 |
| 9. ♘b1-d2  | ♘e4-c5 |
| 10. c2-c3  | d5-d4  |
| 11. ♙b3xe6 |        |

11. ♘g5 has been abandoned, but Karpov shows his opponent another trump card!

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 11. ...   | ♘c5xe6 |
| 12. c3xd4 | ♘c6xd4 |



A theoretical debate raged around this position during the match. The move, and above all the outcome of the debate, convincingly demonstrated the theoretical power of the SCO.

13. a2-a4!

In the two previous games with white Karpov had used an idea of Geller and Razuvaev's, who during the match were working in Moscow at the behest of the sporting authorities: 13.♘e4! ♙e7 (this



natural move took Kortchnoi 79 minutes!) 14.♙e3 ♘f5! (in Game 14 Black reacted badly with 14...♘xf3+? 15.♚xf3 0-0 16.♚fd1 ♚e8 overlooking the crushing 17.♘f6+!). On that occasion there was no particular struggle) 15.♚c2 0-0 16.♘eg5 (Black is posed more problems by 16.♚ad1! ♘xe3 17.fxe3) 16...♙xg5! 17.♘xg5 g6 18.♘xe6 fxe6 19.♚ae1 ♚d5= Game 16. This time what came in handy was an idea by Polugaevsky, who was in Merano, which was then worked on by the World Champion's coaching team. The potential of 13.♘e4 was far from exhausted, but preemptive tactics proved even more effective.

**13. ... ♙f8-e7?!**

Black responds the same way as in the previous games, but on this occasion the natural reply turns out to be far from the best.

This position is still relevant today. Also tried were 13...♙b4 14.axb5 ♘xb5 15.♚a4 ♙xd2 (the latest trend. Previously people played 15...♙e7) 16.♙xd2 0-0 17.♚fd1 c5 18.♙e3 ♚e7 Yakovenko-Mikhalevski, Novi Sad 2009 and 13...♙c5 14.♘e4 ♙b6 (14...0-0 15.♘xc5 ♘xf3+ 16.♚xf3 ♘xc5 17.axb5 axb5 18.♙g5 ♚xa1 19.♙xd8 ♚xf1+ 20.♚xf1 ♚xd8 as played in Topalov-Anand, Dos Hermanas 1996, hasn't found any followers for Black) 15.♘fg5 with better chances for White in both cases.

**14. ♘f3xd4 ♘e6xd4**

14...♚xd4?! 15.axb5 ♚xe5 16.bxa6 hasn't withstood the test of practical play.

**15. ♘d2-e4 ♘d4-e6**

Now White gets a serious advantage by simple means, but it was little better to play 15...0-0 16.axb5 ♘xb5 17.♙e3. All that's left to conclude is that Black's original task was extremely difficult.

**16. ♙c1-e3 0-0**  
**17. f2-f4 ♚d8xd1**

This looks like the lesser evil, as with queens on the board it's even more difficult to defend: 17...g6 18.♚f3 or 17...f5 18.exf6 ♙xf6 19.♚b3.

**18. ♚f1xd1**



White's play is also simple in the end-game. In particular, 19.f5 is threatened. Moreover, up to this point Karpov had only spent 10 minutes in contrast to Kortchnoi's hour and a half, which by no means improved the latter's mood.

**18. ... ♚f8-b8?**

With the help of this somewhat ornate move Kortchnoi tries to resolve a few tasks at once: to organise counterplay on the b-file and free the f8-square for his own pieces. It doesn't lead to success, but it was already extremely tough for Black to defend. For example:

A) 18...f5 19.exf6 ♙xf6 20.♘xf6+ gxf6 21.axb5 axb5 22.♚xa8 ♚xa8 23.♚d5! b4 (23...♚b8 24.f5 ♘g7 25.♙d4 ♘e8 26.♚d7 with total domination for White) 24.♚b5;

B) 18...♙fd8 19.axb5 axb5 20.♙xa8 ♜xa8 21.♙d7 (even more accurate than 21.f5 ♜d8) 21...♙h4! 22.g3 ♜d8! 23.♙xd8+ ♙xd8 24.f5 ♞f8 25.♞f2 with an obvious edge for White in both cases.

19. ♙d1-d7      ♙e7-f8  
20. f4-f5      ♞e6-d8



21. a4-a5!

A trademark device for Karpov – playing for domination combined with prophylaxis! Also not bad was the straightforward 21.♙xc7 bxa4 22.♙d4 ♜b4 23.♙d1 ♜b7 24.♙dc1 a3 25.♙xb7 ♞xb7 26.bxa3 ♙xa3 27.♙c7 ♞d8 28.e6! but the World Champion doesn't like to rush.

21. ...      ♞d8-c6  
22. e5-e6!      f7xe6  
23. f5-f6!      ♞c6-e5

The c7-pawn could no longer be saved. After 23...♙c8 24.♙c1 ♞xa5 25.♙d4 Black's absolutely helpless.

24. ♙d7xc7      ♙b8-c8  
25. ♙a1-c1      ♙c8xc7  
26. ♙c1xc7      ♙a8-d8  
27. h2-h3!?

Extreme restraint and composure! Perfectly sufficient for a win was 27.♙f4 ♞f7 28.♙a7 ♙d4 29.fxg7 ♙xe4

30.gxf8 ♙+ ♞xf8 31.♙d2 but the ripe fruit should fall on its own.

27. ...      h7-h6

Prophylaxis in reply, but in this case it's just evidence of how hopeless things are. An attempt at counterplay gives nothing: 27...♙d7 28.♙c8 ♙f7 29.fxg7 ♙xg7 30.♙h6 ♙f7 31.♞g5.

28. ♙c7-a7      ♞e5-c4

And once more counterplay doesn't work: 28...♙d1+ 29.♞f2 ♜b1 30.♙d4 ♞c6 31.f7+ ♞h7 32.♙a8 ♞xd4 33.♙xf8 ♙xb2+ 34.♞g1 ♜b1+ 35.♞h2 ♙f1 36.♙d8.

29. ♙e3-b6      ♙d8-b8

29...♞xb6 loses very simply. 30.axb6 ♙b8 31.f7+ ♞h8 32.b7. After 29...♙d1+ the easiest move to win is 30.♞f2!.

30. ♙b6-c5!      ♙f8xc5+  
31. ♞e4xc5      g7xf6



32. b2-b4!

Underlining the power of White's position. Black's remaining moves can only be explained by a desire to reach the time control. This was the moment at which the match actually ended.

32. ...      ♙b8-d8  
33. ♙a7xa6      ♞g8-f7

34. ♖a6-a7+	♙f7-g6
35. ♖a7-d7	♜d8-e8
36. a5-a6	♜e8-a8
37. ♜d7-b7	♙g6-f5
38. ♜b7xb5	♙f5-e5
39. ♜b5-b7	♙e5-d5
40. ♜b7-f7	f6-f5
41. ♜f7-f6	1-0

Three more years passed. In the next World Championship match it was like the good old times, as two Soviet chess players met. The young Garry Kasparov threw down the gauntlet to the World Champion Anatoly Karpov, who was at the peak of his career. It was hard to imagine the struggle would be any less fierce than in previous matches, but the reality exceeded all expectations. The uncompromising battle stretched out over six years, five matches and almost 150 games. The great confrontation turned into the main chess event of the twentieth century and had an enormous influence on the future development of the ancient game. I won't retell the twists and turns of that multi-round duel – for that Garry Kasparov needed a few thick volumes. I'll just say that it's impossible to appreciate the inhuman stress of such trials from the side-lines. Such an experience can only be extremely interesting and instructive for those who are preparing for such a trial themselves – and I suspect few readers of this book fall into that category.

As for our main topic, the art of preparation, then the efforts both of Kasparov himself and of his coaching staff resulted in a genuine breakthrough. The methods of chess preparation adopted as a weapon by the young challenger determined the direction in which all

of the world's best players would follow. The appearance, and then the rapid improvement of the MF, only confirmed the correctness of the path.



**Garry Kasparov**

The challenger was renowned as a brilliant opening scholar even before the match for the World Championship title. Perhaps that was one of the few components in which experts preferred him to the Champion, but after what was for Kasparov a catastrophic start to the first match it seemed to be a factor that wouldn't influence the match outcome. Nevertheless, it was precisely constant and unrelenting work on the opening that enabled Kasparov first to balance on the very edge of the abyss, and then to reverse the course of an encounter that had seemed hopelessly lost.

Mentally broken and almost ready to throw in the towel, Garry kept going solely on autopilot on account of his flawless home preparation. His assistants were faced with the task of avoiding the independent play that Kasparov simply wasn't capable of after the initial setbacks.

However unrealistic such a task appeared to be, it was accomplished. A game

would often finish much sooner than the analysis of the challenger's camp... During those tough trials it was precisely an EXHAUSTIVE approach to studying the opening that saved Garry from being crushed. 'From the mid-80s onwards no-one any longer doubted that only tireless and focussed research – the creative assessment of games played and the search for new ideas – could significantly expand the horizons of our ideas about the game'. What can be added to the outstanding player's words is that the first person who understood and implemented that in practice was Kasparov himself, which largely determined his long domination of world chess. However, in the pre-computer era flaws could sometimes be encountered even in that trailblazer's analysis.

[B44]

Game 33

Anatoly Karpov  
Garry Kasparov

Moscow Wch-m 1985 (16)

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. e2-e4  | c7-c5  |
| 2. ♟g1-f3 | e7-e6  |
| 3. d2-d4  | c5xd4  |
| 4. ♟f3xd4 | ♟b8-c6 |
| 5. ♟d4-b5 | d7-d6  |
| 6. c2-c4  | ♟g8-f6 |
| 7. ♟b1-c3 | a7-a6  |
| 8. ♟b5-a3 |        |



8. ...

d6-d5!?

What is this – confidence in the flawlessness of your home analysis or a bluff!? It was first played in Game 12, when the stunning sacrifice brought an undoubted success – Black drew easily. But now the surprise factor had vanished, and moreover it was obvious that his opponent would have carefully prepared for the following encounter. This time you had to expect the most principled response. That was what Kasparov's team was counting on.

9. c4xd5

e6xd5

10. e4xd5

♟c6-b4

11. ♙f1-e2!

The expected improvement. In Game 12 there was no great struggle: 11. ♙c4 ♙g4! (11...b5? 12.0-0 bxc4 13. ♖e1+ ♙e7 14.d6 ♙e6 15. ♟xc4±) 12. ♙e2 ♙xe2 13. ♜xe2+ ♜e7 14. ♙e3 ♟bxd5 15. ♟c2 ♟xe3 16. ♟xe3 ♜e6 and a draw two moves later.

11. ...

♙f8-c5!?



Although objectively this move deserves a more modest assessment, it was precisely this move that ultimately brought success. Black wouldn't have experienced any particularly problems after the natural 11...♟fxd5 12.0-0

♙e6 13. ♘xd5 ♚xd5. But if Karpov was prepared to play this position then Kasparov should avoid it – such was the psychological subtext of their long rivalry. Confirmation of that thought comes from a curious variation given by Kasparov: 13. ♚a4+!? b5 14. ♘axb5 axb5 15. ♙xb5+ ♚e7 16. ♘xd5+ ♘xd5 and here 17. ♚e4!? or 17. ♚h4+ promise White sufficient compensation. Did he really believe his opponent would go for an unclear sacrifice that was absolutely contrary to his playing style? Or did he simply need an additional argument? In any case, 11... ♙c5 was played instantly at the board.

## 12. 0-0?!

The reply also wasn't long in coming, although the stronger 12. ♙e3! ♙xe3 13. ♚a4+ ♙d7! (13... ♘d7? 14. ♚xb4 ♙c5 15. ♚e4+ ♚f8 16. 0-0 was seen in the game Karpov-Van der Wiel, Brussels 1986) 14. ♚xb4 wasn't among the most difficult of moves, and is shown instantly by the MF. How can you explain such an amazing example of collective chess blindness? Cases when the flawed nature of hours (and sometimes days) of analysis becomes obvious immediately after the critical position appears in the game, are well-known to all players. In this particular situation Kasparov and his team, distracted by the analysis of the long-term consequences of the sacrifice, overlooked something at the very beginning. While Karpov... trusted his opponent too much. Moreover, it was important to demonstrate that he was absolutely prepared himself, so the reply followed quickly. It should be added that 12. ♙e3 was by no means winning. Black could put up stubborn

resistance: 14... ♚b6! 15. ♚xb6 ♙xb6 16. ♘c4 ♙c5 with some compensation for the pawn.

12. ... 0-0  
13. ♙e2-f3?!

13. ♙g5! ♘bxd5 14. ♘xd5 ♚xd5 15. ♙xf6 ♚xd1 16. ♚fxd1 gxf6 17. ♚ac1 would ensure White a small but comfortable edge. Why didn't Karpov go for that position? It seems he thought Black had no compensation for the pawn and there was no reason to voluntarily give up the extra material.

13. ... ♙c8-f5  
14. ♙c1-g5

This isn't as strong as it would have been on the previous move, but after 14. ♙e3 ♙xe3 15. fxe3 ♙d3 16. ♚e1 ♚b6 Black also has wonderful piece play, fully compensating for the slight material deficit.

14. ... ♚f8-e8  
15. ♚d1-d2 b7-b5!  
16. ♚a1-d1

16.d6 ♚a7 17. ♚ad1 ♚d7 is connected to the loss of White's great hope – the d-pawn, as after 18. ♙f4 there would follow 18... ♘d3.

16. ... ♘b4-d3



**17. ♖a3-b1?!**

It seems the World Champion underestimated the danger of his position, as although the black pieces are placed very threateningly no direct threats are evident.

It was worth considering discharging the tension, even at the cost of a pawn: 17.d6! ♜xd6! (the most energetic move – this was how Kasparov was planning to play. The consequences of the natural 17...b4 are more likely in White's favour. For example: 18.♙xa8 ♜xa8 19.♙xf6 gxf6 20.d7 ♜d8 21.♖a4 bxa3 22.♖xc5 ♖xc5 23.♜a5) 18.♙xa8 ♜xa8 and now 19.h3! (stronger than Kasparov's suggestion of 19.♙xf6 ♜xf6 20.♖c2 ♖xb2 21.♖d5 ♜d6) 19...b4 (if 19...♜c6 20.♙xf6 ♜xf6 21.♖c2 ♖xb2 22.♖d5 ♜d6 23.♖ce3 then the extra move 19.h3 turns out to have been by no means superfluous) 20.♖c4 ♜e6 21.♙xf6 gxf6 (21...♜xc4 22.b3! ♜e6 23.♖a4 gxf6 24.♖xc5 ♖xc5 25.♜xb4 isn't dangerous either) 22.♖e3 bxc3 23.♜xc3 and it seems White holds. True, it's extremely tough to decide on such an operation during a game.

**17. ... h7-h6!**  
**18. ♙g5-h4 b5-b4!**  
**19. ♖c3-a4**

Both after the more natural 19.♖e2 ♜b6 or 19...♜d6 Black has a magnificent position.

**19. ... ♙c5-d6**

Kasparov: 'In this position I was still relying on my home analysis!' It's no wonder that with such analytical enthusiasm they managed to miss the banal 12.♙e3!.

**20. ♙h4-g3 ♜a8-c8**  
**21. b2-b3**



**21. ... g7-g5!**  
**22. ♙g3xd6**

No good is 22.♖b2? ♖xb2 23.♜xb2 g4 24.♙e2 ♜c2 – that's the point of 21...g5!. The attempt to liven up play with 22.h4 ♖e4 23.♙xe4 ♙xe4 24.♙xd6 ♜xd6 25.f3 ♙g6 26.hxg5 ♖f4 27.♜fe1 hxg5 also brings no relief. The fate of the white knights is pitiable.

**22. ... ♜d8xd6**  
**23. g2-g3 ♖f6-d7!**  
**24. ♙f3-g2?!**

White lets the last chance to survive slip. He should have brought the reclusive knight into play: 24.♖b2 and although after 24...♖7e5 (or 24...♜f6 25.♖c4 ♖7e5 26.♖xe5 ♖xe5 27.♙g2) 25.♙g2 there's no question Black has an edge, the game is still far from over.

**24. ... ♜d6-f6**

Now the a4-knight is out of play, and White's other pieces also have no prospects. White has to hope for a miracle.

**25. a2-a3 a6-a5**  
**26. a3xb4 a5xb4**  
**27. ♜d2-a2 ♙f5-g6**  
**28. d5-d6**

There simply aren't any useful moves:  
28. ♖d2 ♜e2.

28. ...	g5-g4!
29. ♔a2-d2	♙g8-g7
30. f2-f3	♜f6xd6
31. f3xg4	♜d6-d4+

The start of the final attack!

32. ♙g1-h1	♜d7-f6!
33. ♜f1-f4	♜f6-e4
34. ♜d2xd3	♜e4-f2+
35. ♜f4xf2	♙g6xd3
36. ♜f2-d2	♜d4-e3
37. ♜d2xd3	♜c8-c1!
38. ♜a4-b2	♜e3-f2
39. ♜b1-d2	♜c1xd1+
40. ♜b2xd1	♜e8-e1+
0-1	

Of course nowadays missing a puncture like 12. ♙e3 during preparation is impossible – for that we've got the vigilant eye of the MF. Much of the analysis that was flawless, by previous standards, is now undergoing reassessment.

The details and features of modern preparation will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, but for now let's return once more to the days of the SCO. Theory has been advanced by the efforts not only of the World Champions, but also of the challengers for that title. New players appeared with their own vision of chess and with new and sometimes paradoxical ideas.

[A17]

Game 34

**Oleg Romanishin**  
**Tigran Petrosian**

Yerevan ch-URS 1975 (8)

1. c2-c4	♜g8-f6
2. ♜b1-c3	e7-e6

3. ♜g1-f3	b7-b6
4. e2-e4	♙c8-b7



What haven't people played in this position? 5.d3, 5.e5, 5. ♜c2 and even 5. ♜e2. But for some reason it hadn't yet occurred to anyone to play an ugly-looking but perfectly logical bishop move.

5. ♙f1-d3!? d7-d6

Unfortunately I wasn't a witness to the reaction of the ex-World Champion to this brutish move – I'm sure there was something to see! However, Romanishin was ready for anything. As Adrian Mikhalchishin, his second at that tournament, says, 'Oleg laughed as he asked me: do you think when the full hall sees it they'll start to whistle at me or at the demonstrator?' But if you glance at the position without any preconceptions then 5. ♙d3 incorporates a perfectly healthy idea: to switch the bishop to the b1-h7 diagonal and play d2-d4, and in the minimum number of moves.

Petrosian's purely chess reaction, however, was perfectly predictable: he usually responded to opening surprises in the most restrained and reliable manner. Therefore he rejected more active ideas like 5...d5 6.cxd5 exd5 7.e5 ♜fd7 or 5...c5 6.0-0 ♜c6 7.e5.

- |                  |               |
|------------------|---------------|
| <b>6.</b> ♖d3-c2 | <b>c7-c5</b>  |
| <b>7.</b> d2-d4  | <b>c5xd4</b>  |
| <b>8.</b> ♘f3xd4 | <b>♙f8-e7</b> |
| <b>9.</b> 0-0    | <b>0-0</b>    |
| <b>10.</b> b2-b3 | <b>♘b8-c6</b> |

After the development of the queen's knight to d7, more widespread in the 'hedgehog' system, White would freely place his pieces in the centre, while the c2-bishop is ideally placed.

- |                   |              |
|-------------------|--------------|
| <b>11.</b> ♙c1-b2 | <b>a7-a6</b> |
| <b>12.</b> ♖g1-h1 |              |

A useful prophylactic move. 12. ♘xc6 ♙xc6 13. ♖d3 g6 (also possible is 13... ♙e8 as the thematic sacrifice 14. ♘d5 exd5 15. exd5 ♙b7 16. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 17. ♖xh7+ ♖f8 is insufficient here) 14. a4 ♖c7 15. f4 ♙ad8 16. ♖e2 ♙fe8 didn't bring White any particular dividends in Polugaevsky-Petrosian, Kislovodsk 1982.

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|----------------|---------------|
| <b>12.</b> ... | <b>♖d8-c7</b> |
|----------------|---------------|

On this square the queen is subject to all kinds of blows. 12... ♖d7!? was more reliable, with the idea of 13... ♘d4 14. ♖d4 b5. Here's how things went in Mecking-Polugaevsky, Lucerne m 1977 (12): 13. ♘xc6 ♙xc6 14. ♖d3 b5 15. cxb5 ♙xb5 (15... axb5 16. ♘d5! ♙xd5 17. exd5 with unpleasant pressure) 16. ♘xb5 ♖xb5 17. ♙ac1. White's chances are nevertheless preferable.

- |                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>13.</b> f2-f4  | <b>♙a8-d8</b> |
| <b>14.</b> ♙a1-c1 |               |

With the threat of 15. ♘d5.

- |                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>14.</b> ...    | <b>♖c7-b8</b> |
| <b>15.</b> ♙f1-f3 |               |

With the unambiguous intention of giving mate. Also possible was the more

solid set-up 15. ♘xc6 ♙xc6 16. ♖d3 ♙fe8 17. ♙ce1.

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| <b>15.</b> ... | <b>g7-g6</b> |
|----------------|--------------|

Prophylaxis once more! It looked more interesting to play 15... d5!? 16. cxd5 ♘xd4 (16... exd5? 17. e5 with a clear advantage for White, as after 17... ♘e4 there's the strong 18. ♘xd5, but 17... ♘xd4 actually loses due to 18. exf6 ♙xf6 19. ♙xh7+!) 17. ♖xd4 exd5 18. e5 ♙c5 19. ♖d3 ♘e4 20. ♖e2 f5 with a double-edged position. The move in the game weakens the a1-h8 diagonal and makes the standard piece sacrifice possible.



- |                    |              |
|--------------------|--------------|
| <b>16.</b> ♘c3-d5! | <b>e6xd5</b> |
|--------------------|--------------|

16... ♘xd5 17. cxd5 is equivalent to capitulation.

- |                   |
|-------------------|
| <b>17.</b> e4xd5! |
|-------------------|

The brilliant 17. ♘f5?! is coolly refuted by the imperturbable MF: 17... dxe4! 18. ♙g3 (18. ♘xe7+ ♘xe7 19. ♖d4 d5! 20. ♖xf6 d4) 18... d5 19. ♘xe7+ ♘xe7 20. ♙xf6 ♘f5.

- |                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| <b>17.</b> ...    | <b>♘c6xd4</b>  |
| <b>18.</b> ♖d1xd4 | <b>♙d8-e8!</b> |

The best defence! It was too late to play 18... ♖c7? 19. f5! with the threat of 20. ♖h4.



## 19. f4-f5!

19.g4!? is interesting, but Black holds here as well: 19...♖a8! and now:

A) 20.g5 ♘xd5! 21.cxd5 ♖xd5 22.♖d1! ♖xd1+ 23.♜xd1 ♘h5 White has sufficient compensation for the pawn, but no more than that;

B) More cunning is 20.♙e4!? but then 20...♖c8! (20...♙d8?! 21.♜e1! ♖c8 22.g5 ♖g4 23.♜ff1±) 21.g5 ♖c5 22.♖c3 ♙d8 23.♙d3 ♙xd5 24.cxd5 ♖xc3 25.♙xc3 ♘d5 and Black should hold.

19. ... ♙e7-d8  
20. ♖d4-h4 ♜e8-e5!

Petrosian's trademark device! Losing instantly were both 20...♘d5? 21.♖xh7+ and 20...♘h5? 21.♖xh5.

## 21. ♖h4-h6!



In case of 21.fxg6?! fxg6 22.♜cf1 ♙g7 White's attack hits a dead-end.

21. ... ♖b8-c7?

The first mistake, but it's immediately decisive. Essential was 21...♘g4! 22.♖f4 ♘f6 and it's hard for White to find something more than 23.♖h6=, even taking into account his opponent's time trouble.

## 22. ♜f3-g3!

Black's position suddenly collapses around the g6-point.

22. ... ♙b7-c8  
23. ♙b2xe5 d6xe5  
24. f5xg6

Even stronger was the zwischenzug 24.d6!.

24. ... f7xg6  
25. ♙c2xg6+- ♘f6-g4

25...hxg6 26.♜xg6+ ♙f7 27.♜g7+ ♙e8 28.♜xc7 ♙xc7 29.♜f1+-.

26. ♙g6-h5 ♜f8-f6  
27. ♖h6-d2 ♜f6-f4

27...♜g6 28.♙xg6 hxg6 29.♖e2+-.

## 28. d5-d6

There was an easier win after the composed 28.h3 ♙h4 29.♜xg4+ ♙xg4 30.♙xg4.

28. ... ♖c7-g7  
29. d6-d7!?

Here it was worth considering 29.♙xg4! ♜xg4 30.♖d5+ ♙h8 31.♜xg4 ♙xg4 32.♜f1.

29. ... ♙c8-b7?

Also bad is 29...♙xd7? 30.♙xg4 ♜xg4 31.♜xg4 ♖xg4 32.♙d1+- but 29...♖xd7 would have prolonged the resistance, although after 30.♖xd7 ♙xd7 31.♙xg4 ♜xg4 32.♙d1! ♙h4 33.♜xd7 ♙xg3 34.hxg3 ♜xg3 35.♙d6 White has a technically winning end-game.

30. ♖d2xf4! 1-0

If 30...exf4 31.♜xg4 ♙g5 32.♙d1.

[C92]

**Efim Geller****Viacheslav Eingorn**

Riga ch-URS 1985 (9)

Game 35

of this encounter made a big impression on specialists, and almost a quarter of a century passed before the topic was developed further!

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 1. e2-e4   | e7-e5  |
| 2. ♘g1-f3  | ♘b8-c6 |
| 3. ♙f1-b5  | a7-a6  |
| 4. ♙b5-a4  | ♘g8-f6 |
| 5. 0-0     | ♙f8-e7 |
| 6. ♖f1-e1  | b7-b5  |
| 7. ♙a4-b3  | d7-d6  |
| 8. c2-c3   | 0-0    |
| 9. h2-h3   | ♙c8-b7 |
| 10. d2-d4  | ♖f8-e8 |
| 11. ♘b1-d2 | ♙e7-f8 |
| 12. ♙b3-c2 | g7-g6  |
| 13. d4-d5  |        |

Quite a popular plan in this position. Geller himself had played like this more than once before, so Black's preparation was concrete in character.

13. ... ♘c6-e7

Black has much more often chosen 13...♘b8, remarkably even after this game. Neither the course nor the result

**Viacheslav Eingorn**

14. ♘d2-f1

It can't be ruled out that 14.b3 is more promising for White, leaving the d2-knight closer to the queenside.

14. ... ♙f8-g7

15. b2-b3



15. ... ♘f6xe4!

A bolt from the blue!

16. ♙c2xe4 f7-f5

17. ♙e4-c2

For the moment Black has only a single pawn for the piece, but the important d5-pawn is already doomed, it's hard to defend c3 and all Black's minor pieces have developed maximum activity. Therefore from the positional point of view the sacrifice is absolutely correct. There is, however, another significant factor that influenced the outcome of this encounter. Efim Geller, a brilliant chess player and a deep theoretician, often amazed his opponents with opening surprises. Perhaps that's why a novelty from his opponent usually provoked a standard response from him: he had a deep think, striving at

all costs to refute his opponent's idea. It wasn't uncommon for such maximalism to lead him into time trouble. Moreover, he clearly disliked defence, particularly when it was passive. So from the psychological point of view as well Eingorn's find proved a great success.

**17. ... e5-e4!?**

Many years later Navara tried another tempting option against Carlsen: 17...♟xd5!?:



analysis diagram

A) 18.♟d2 e4 19.♞d4 b4 20.c4 ♟xd4 (20...♞b6 is also interesting) 21.cxd5 ♟xa1 22.♞xa1 ♟xd5 23.♟xb4 and White is at least not worse;

B) 18.b4!? You can assume that his young opponent was playing 'on sight'. In any case, he rejected the natural (and probably objectively stronger) 18...♞xc3 (doubt might have been cast on White's idea by the unexpected 18...c5!) 19.♟b3+ d5 20.♞c2 ♞e4 21.♞xe4!? fxe4 22.♞g5 a5!? 23.bxa5 ♞xa5 24.♞xe4. A position that was difficult either to play or evaluate had arisen, Carlsen-Navara, Dresden 2008.

**18. ♞f3-d4 ♞e7xd5**



**19. ♞d4-e2?**

An obvious mistake, which can be explained by stress and fatigue. It was essential to play 19.♟d2! b4 20.c4 after which you'd get the position already looked at in the notes to Black's 17th move.

**19. ... ♞d5xc3**  
**20. ♞e2xc3 ♟g7xc3**  
**21. ♞a1-b1 c7-c5!**

Black doesn't agree to give up the long diagonal, even to win the exchange. Now the outcome of the battle is decided by his fearsome pawn armada in the centre.

**22. ♟c1-b2**

22.♟d2 ♟e5!.

**22. ... ♟c3xb2!**  
**23. ♞b1xb2 d6-d5**  
**24. ♞d1-c1 d5-d4**  
**25. ♟c2-d1 ♞d8-d6**  
**26. ♞b2-c2 ♞a8-c8**  
**27. ♞c1-g5 ♞d6-e5**

Black's position is so good that he can allow himself moves made 'based on general considerations'. It was perfectly appropriate to play the more decisive 27...c4.

**28. h3-h4 f5-f4**  
**29. ♟d1-g4 ♞e5xg5**

- |                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>30. h4xg5</b>  | <b>♖c8-c7</b> |
| <b>31. ♖e1-d1</b> | <b>d4-d3</b>  |
| <b>32. ♖c2-c3</b> | <b>♖e8-e5</b> |
| <b>33. f2-f3</b>  | <b>e4-e3</b>  |

More accurate was 33...♖xg5 34.♗e6+ ♗g7 35.fxe4 ♗xe4.

### 34. ♖c3xd3?!

Missing a chance to put up a more stubborn defence: 34.♗xe3 fxe3 35.♖cxd3 c4 36.bxc4 bxc4 37.♖c3. However, White was already in terrible time trouble.

- |                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| <b>34. ...</b>     | <b>e3-e2</b>    |
| <b>35. ♖d1-e1</b>  | <b>e2xf1 ♖+</b> |
| <b>36. ♗g1xf1</b>  | <b>♖e5xg5</b>   |
| <b>37. ♗f1-f2</b>  | <b>♗g8-g7</b>   |
| <b>38. ♖d3-d7+</b> | <b>♖c7xd7</b>   |
| <b>39. ♗g4xd7</b>  | <b>♗g7-f7</b>   |
| <b>40. a2-a4</b>   | <b>♗b7-d5</b>   |
| <b>41. ♗d7-c8</b>  | <b>♗d5xb3</b>   |
| <b>42. a4-a5</b>   | <b>c5-c4</b>    |
| <b>43. ♗c8xa6</b>  | <b>c4-c3</b>    |
| <b>44. ♗a6-b7</b>  | <b>b5-b4</b>    |
| <b>45. ♖e1-a1</b>  | <b>♗b3-d5</b>   |
| <b>46. ♗b7xd5+</b> | <b>0-1</b>      |

It's not often that you manage to find a new idea in a well-studied variation. It's even rarer for an original idea to withstand the test of analysis, but even in those cases when the variations totally confirm the correctness of the original concept you far from always get to play a successful find in practice. A lot depends on luck, and on blind chance. Grandmaster Yuri Razuvaev hit upon an unexpected idea in the Meran Variation while preparing for a game against Evgeny Sveshnikov. On that occasion something didn't work out, and a favourable situation didn't occur for such a long time that the idea was actually

forgotten. It was only a few years later while cleaning that a notebook with the variations literally fell on Yuri's head. Then soon afterwards a suitable occasion also presented itself.

### [D47]

**Yury Razuvaev**  
**Vladimir Bagirov**

Game 36

Jurmala 1987 (7)

- |                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>1. d2-d4</b>   | <b>d7-d5</b>  |
| <b>2. c2-c4</b>   | <b>c7-c6</b>  |
| <b>3. ♖b1-c3</b>  | <b>♗g8-f6</b> |
| <b>4. e2-e3</b>   | <b>e7-e6</b>  |
| <b>5. ♖g1-f3</b>  | <b>♗b8-d7</b> |
| <b>6. ♗f1-d3</b>  | <b>d5xc4</b>  |
| <b>7. ♗d3xc4</b>  | <b>b7-b5</b>  |
| <b>8. ♗c4-d3</b>  | <b>♗c8-b7</b> |
| <b>9. e3-e4</b>   | <b>b5-b4</b>  |
| <b>10. ♖c3-a4</b> | <b>c6-c5</b>  |
| <b>11. e4-e5</b>  | <b>♗f6-d5</b> |
| <b>12. 0-0</b>    | <b>c5xd4</b>  |



At the moment when this game was played the diagram position was already well-known. In particular, Sveshnikov, Polugaevsky and Bagirov constantly played this way as Black. Analysis stretched for many moves but it always began from the obligatory, as it seemed at the time, 13.♖e1.

### 13. ♖f3xd4!?

For the impressionable Vladimir Bagirov, who was always complaining of bad luck both in life and in chess, this novelty in a thoroughly studied variation must have been a crushing blow.

## 13. ... g7-g6?!

Not the best, but a natural reaction. Of course, it's very hard to decide on capturing the pawn without preliminary analysis, and especially against a prepared opponent. You can understand the prudence of Bagirov, for whom deep home analysis was far from an abstract concept. Accepting the sacrifice was subsequently tested on numerous occasions: 13... $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xe5}$  14. $\text{\textcircled{b}}\text{b5+}$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{d7}$  15. $\text{\textcircled{f}}\text{e1}$   $\text{\textcircled{f}}\text{c8}$  16. $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{h5}$  g6 17. $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{h3}$  (17. $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{e5?!}$   $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{f6}$  18. $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{xf6}$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xf6}$  gave no compensation for the pawn in the game Ftacnik-Tukmakov, Biel 1988) 17...a6 18. $\text{\textcircled{g}}\text{g5}$   $\text{\textcircled{g}}\text{e7}$  19. $\text{\textcircled{g}}\text{xe7}$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xe7}$  (19... $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{xe7}$  20. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xe6}$  fxe6 21. $\text{\textcircled{f}}\text{xe6}$  axb5 22. $\text{\textcircled{f}}\text{xe7+}$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xe7}$  23. $\text{\textcircled{f}}\text{e1}$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{d8}$  24. $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{e3}$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{d5}$  25. $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{g5+}$   $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{c7}$  26. $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{g3+}$  leads to a draw) 20. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xe6}$  fxe6 21. $\text{\textcircled{g}}\text{xd7+}$   $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{xd7}$  22. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{b6}$  occurred in the rapid game Oll-Sveshnikov, Tallinn 1988. Black's chances were somewhat greater, although the game was ultimately won by White. Bagirov had every cause to curse his fate. The shell intended for Sveshnikov accidentally hit him.

True, soon afterwards Evgeny suffered as well: 13...a6? 14. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xe6}$  fxe6 15. $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{h5+}$   $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{e7}$  16. $\text{\textcircled{g}}\text{g5+}$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{5f6}$  17.exf6+ with an overwhelming position for White, Smagin-Sveshnikov, Sochi 1988.

The sacrifice could also have been rejected in a more natural manner: 13... $\text{\textcircled{g}}\text{e7}$ . Here's one of the latest examples on that theme: Grischuk-Shirov, Bilbao 2009: 14. $\text{\textcircled{f}}\text{e1}$  0-0 15. $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{g4}$   $\text{\textcircled{f}}\text{e8}$

16. $\text{\textcircled{b}}\text{b5}$   $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{h8}$  17. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{d2}$  a6 18. $\text{\textcircled{g}}\text{c6}$   $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{c7}$  (18... $\text{\textcircled{g}}\text{xc6}$  was what Shirov chose against Kramnik (Dresden 2008), but he got a difficult position after 19. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xc6}$   $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{c7}$  20. $\text{\textcircled{f}}\text{ac1}$   $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{b7}$  21. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xe7}$   $\text{\textcircled{f}}\text{xe7}$  22.b3) 19. $\text{\textcircled{f}}\text{ac1}$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xe5}$  20. $\text{\textcircled{g}}\text{xb7}$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xc4}$  21. $\text{\textcircled{f}}\text{xc7}$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xc7}$  22. $\text{\textcircled{g}}\text{xa8}$   $\text{\textcircled{f}}\text{xa8}$  23. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{c6}$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{d5}$  24. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xe7}$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xe7}$  25. $\text{\textcircled{g}}\text{xb4}$  with a slight edge for White. Curiously Shirov didn't hold a perfectly defensible position against Grischuk but heroically saved a lost position against Kramnik. Chess is far from always logical.

## 14. $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{d1-g4}$ $\text{\textcircled{f}}\text{f8-g7?}$



One of the refrains of this book is the thought that mistakes come in pairs. In particular that relates to such extreme situations. You can't recommend Black 14... $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xe5?}$  15. $\text{\textcircled{b}}\text{b5+}$   $\text{\textcircled{g}}\text{c6}$  (15... $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{d7}$  16. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xe6}$ ) 16. $\text{\textcircled{g}}\text{xc6+}$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xc6}$  17. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xc6}$   $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{d7}$  18. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{d4}$   $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{xa4}$  19. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xe6!}$  fxe6 (if 19... $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{d7}$  then 20. $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{d4}$  wins) 20. $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{xe6+}$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{e7}$  21. $\text{\textcircled{f}}\text{e1}$  with a powerful attack for White, but after 14... $\text{\textcircled{g}}\text{e7}$  there is still everything to play for.

## 15. $\text{\textcircled{g}}\text{c1-g5!}$

The fearless MF immediately launches itself at the black king: 15. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xe6!}$  fxe6 16. $\text{\textcircled{g}}\text{g5}$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{e7}$  17. $\text{\textcircled{b}}\text{b5!}$  and has no doubt it's correct to do so, but a human

has something to lose and therefore Razuvaev's choice is more understandable.

**15. ... ♖d7xe5**

You wouldn't envy Black! The move in the game looks very dangerous, but 15...♔a5 is no better: 16.♘xe6! (it's also not bad to play the cautious 16.♙b5! a6 17.♙xd7+ ♔xd7 18.♘b3!±) 16...♙xe5 17.♞fe1 ♔xa4 18.♘c5 ♘xc5 19.♞xe5+ ♔f8 20.♙h6+ ♔g8 21.♔d4 and it's time for Black to resign.

**16. ♘d4xe6! ♙e5xg4**



**17. ♘e6xd8!?**

Not a bad decision, but even more forcing was 17.♙b5+! ♔d7 18.♘g7+ ♔f8 19.♙xd7 ♘gf6 20.♘e6+ fxe6 21.♙xe6+.

**17. ... h7-h6!**  
**18. ♙g5-h4 g6-g5**

The continuation 18...♞xd8 19.♙b5+ ♞d7 20.♞ad1 a6 21.♙xd7+ ♔xd7 22.♘c5+ ♔c6 23.♘xb7 isn't greatly appealing either.

**19. ♘d8xb7 g5xh4**  
**20. ♙d3-c4?! 20.h3! ♘gf6 21.♞fe1+ ♔f8 22.♞ad1**

left Black no chance at all.

**20. ... ♘d5-b6!**  
**21. ♘a4xb6 a7xb6**  
**22. ♘b7-d6+ ♔e8-e7**  
**23. ♘d6xf7 ♞h8-e8**  
**24. ♞a1-d1 ♙g7xb2**

And Black, not without some help from his opponent, managed to hold this difficult position.

**25. ♘f7-d6?!**

25.♙b3!.

**25. ... ♞e8-d8**  
**26. ♘d6-f5+ ♔e7-f6**  
**27. ♘f5xh4 ♘g4-e5**  
**28. ♙c4-d5 ♞a8-c8**  
**29. f2-f4?**

29.g3!±.

**29. ... ♘e5-g4**  
**30. ♞f1-e1 ♞d8-e8!**



**31. ♞e1xe7?!**

31.♘f3 ♘e3=.

**31. ... ♞c8xe8?**

Missing an unexpected chance to seize the initiative: 31...♙d4+! 32.♔f1 ♘xh2+ 33.♔e2 ♞xe8+.

But now the advantage is again on White's side.

**32. ♘h4-f3?! 1/2-1/2**

Both 32.♙c4 and 32.g3 were much stronger. After the move in the game White offered a draw without waiting for 32...b3! 33.♙xb3 ♖a3.

The result of the encounter can't be described as entirely fair, but the whims of Fortune are in no way predictable.

To end this chapter here are a few examples from the chess life of your author, who for many years was a fully-fledged member of the SCO.

Folk wisdom says: 'Intelligent men learn by others' mistakes, fools by their own'. There are similar sayings in many other languages. The fact that it's better to be intelligent is hard to deny, but in chess even the very greatest suffer losses. Therefore acquiring wisdom – knowing yourself with all your inevitable contradictions – is only possible by working on your OWN mistakes. Life, fortunately or unfortunately, never ceases to throw up material for self-improvement.

It would be hard to describe the 51st USSR Championship as outstanding, or in any case there's no way it can be compared to the previous anniversary Championship where I managed to finish second behind Karpov. Besides, to my total surprise it turned out I was the oldest participant in the tournament.

All of those circumstances made me one of the favourites for the event, at least by my own calculations. However, everything went completely differently to how I'd expected. As early as the second round the young master Igor Novikov caught me out with incredibly deep and accurate home preparation.

[D85]

Igor Novikov

Vladimir Tukmakov

Lvov ch-URS 1984 (2)

Game 37

- |     |        |        |
|-----|--------|--------|
| 1.  | d2-d4  | ♘g8-f6 |
| 2.  | ♘g1-f3 | g7-g6  |
| 3.  | c2-c4  | ♙f8-g7 |
| 4.  | ♘b1-c3 | d7-d5  |
| 5.  | c4xd5  | ♘f6xd5 |
| 6.  | e2-e4  | ♘d5xc3 |
| 7.  | b2xc3  | c7-c5  |
| 8.  | ♚a1-b1 | 0-0    |
| 9.  | ♙f1-e2 | ♘b8-c6 |
| 10. | d4-d5  | ♘c6-e5 |
| 11. | ♘f3xe5 | ♙g7xe5 |
| 12. | ♚d1-d2 | e7-e6  |
| 13. | f2-f4  | ♙e5-g7 |



A natural continuation, which was also the main one back then.

- |     |        |        |
|-----|--------|--------|
| 14. | c3-c4  | ♚f8-e8 |
| 15. | e4-e5  | f7-f6  |
| 16. | d5-d6  | f6xe5  |
| 17. | ♙c1-b2 | e5xf4  |
| 18. | ♙b2xg7 | ♘g8xg7 |
| 19. | 0-0    | ♚e8-f8 |
| 20. | ♚f1xf4 | ♚f8xf4 |
| 21. | ♚d2xf4 | ♚d8-f6 |
| 22. | ♚f4-e4 |        |

The theory of this variation was developing rapidly at the time. I also played this position as White: 22.♚e3 b6

23. ♖h1!? ♕d7 (23...e5 is stronger)  
 24. ♖f1 ♖b2 25. ♖f3 ♕c6 26. ♖f7+  
 ♗h8 27. ♕f3 ♕xf3 28. ♖xf3 ♖d8  
 29. d7 and Black is faced with a fight for  
 a draw (Tukmakov-Ftacnik, Hastings  
 1982/83).

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|--------------------|----------------|
| <b>22. ...</b>     | <b>♖a8-b8</b>  |
| <b>23. ♖b1-f1</b>  | <b>♖f6-d4+</b> |
| <b>24. ♖e4xd4+</b> | <b>c5xd4</b>   |
| <b>25. ♖f1-b1!</b> |                |

At that moment this was a novelty. Previously White had played 25.c5.

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|----------------|---------------|
| <b>25. ...</b> | <b>♕c8-d7</b> |
|----------------|---------------|

No good at all is 25...e5? 26.c5 ♕f5  
 27.c6!.

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|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>26. ♕e2-f3</b> | <b>b7-b6</b>  |
| <b>27. c4-c5</b>  | <b>♖b8-c8</b> |
| <b>28. c5-c6</b>  | <b>♕d7xc6</b> |
| <b>29. ♖b1-c1</b> | <b>♕c6-d7</b> |
| <b>30. ♖c1xc8</b> | <b>♕d7xc8</b> |
| <b>31. ♕f3-c6</b> | <b>♖g7-f6</b> |
| <b>32. d6-d7</b>  | <b>♕c8xd7</b> |
| <b>33. ♕c6xd7</b> |               |

This somewhat unusual ending, reached practically by force after 25. ♖b1, doesn't look so dangerous for Black. The only thing that concerned me was the quick and confident play of my opponent.

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|----------------|--------------|
| <b>33. ...</b> | <b>e6-e5</b> |
|----------------|--------------|

It seems that after the natural move in the game the position can't be held. The consequences of 33... ♖e5 are less clear. In his book *Revolution in the 70s* Kasparov writes that during preparation for the 1986 match against Karpov he analysed this position in detail with his assistants but still couldn't find a clear draw for Black. Novikov practically put an end to this variation, but 25 (!) years

later a daredevil was found who was brave enough to try and defend the ending. After 33... ♖e5 34. ♖f2 ♖d5 Black even managed to win in the game Shulman-Marin, Reykjavik 2009, which was generous compensation for the investigative work he'd put into it. But I won't take it upon myself to claim that 33... ♖e5 draws. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that the MF is far from all-powerful in such positions.

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|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>34. ♖g1-f2</b> | <b>e5-e4</b>  |
| <b>35. ♕d7-c6</b> | <b>♖f6-e5</b> |
| <b>36. h2-h4!</b> |               |



It's essentially only this brilliant move, found during Novikov's analysis, that ultimately determines the evaluation of the position. Zugzwang means that Black's unable to maintain his central pawns on their positions. By preventing the activation of the black king with the g3-h4 barrier White wins after the ♖e2-d2-c2-b3-c4 king march. There's nothing Black can do about this plan.

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|--------------------|---------------|
| <b>36. ...</b>     | <b>h7-h6</b>  |
| <b>37. g2-g3</b>   | <b>g6-g5</b>  |
| <b>38. h4-h5</b>   | <b>♖e5-f5</b> |
| <b>39. a2-a4</b>   | <b>♖f5-e5</b> |
| <b>40. ♕c6-b7</b>  | <b>♖e5-f5</b> |
| <b>41. ♕b7-c8+</b> | <b>♖f5-e5</b> |
| <b>42. ♖f2-e2</b>  | <b>♖e5-d5</b> |



- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 43. ♖c8-b7+ | ♔d5-e5 |
| 44. ♜e2-d2  | ♜e5-f5 |
| 45. ♜b7-c8+ | ♜f5-e5 |
| 46. ♜d2-c2  | d4-d3+ |
| 47. ♜c2-c3  | ♜e5-d5 |
| 48. ♜c8-a6  | ♜d5-e5 |
| 49. ♜a6-b7  | ♜e5-f5 |
| 50. ♜c3-d2  | ♜f5-g4 |
| 51. ♜b7xe4  | ♜g4xg3 |
| 52. ♜e4xd3  | g5-g4  |
| 53. ♜d3-f5  | ♜g3-f3 |
| 54. ♜d2-e1  | ♜f3-f4 |
| 55. ♜f5-c8  | ♜f4-g5 |
| 56. ♜e1-f2  | ♜g5xh5 |
| 57. ♜f2-g3  | ♜h5-g5 |
| 58. ♜c8xg4  | a7-a6  |
| 59. ♜g4-e2  | b6-b5  |
| 60. ♜e2xb5  | 1-0    |

Surely a record-breaking achievement in terms of length of analysis! In any case, in the pre-computer era it wasn't beaten. As Igor told me, the ending that arose after Black's 24th move had already occurred in one of his games in some insignificant event not long before the Championship. That game ended in a draw, but Novikov couldn't get rid of a sense of dissatisfaction. For a few days (!) he neglected the remaining games and conducted an analysis of that unusual ending. The tournament was ruined, naturally, but his efforts weren't in vain. The quality of the analysis was not only confirmed by the result of our game, but it also stood the test of time. Of course, that record brought me no joy – especially as the tournament had only just started and the Grünfeld Defence was my main weapon against 1.d4 at the time. I didn't have to wait long at all for the next trial. In the fourth round the same critical opening position arose.

This time instead of an endgame we got an extremely sharp middlegame, but luck wasn't on my side on this occasion either.

[D85]

Viacheslav Eingorn  
Vladimir Tukmakov

Game 38

Lvov ch-URS 1984 (4)

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4   | ♜g8-f6 |
| 2. ♜g1-f3  | g7-g6  |
| 3. c2-c4   | ♜f8-g7 |
| 4. ♜b1-c3  | d7-d5  |
| 5. c4xd5   | ♜f6xd5 |
| 6. e2-e4   | ♜d5xc3 |
| 7. b2xc3   | c7-c5  |
| 8. ♚a1-b1  | 0-0    |
| 9. ♜f1-e2  | ♜b8-c6 |
| 10. d4-d5  | ♜c6-e5 |
| 11. ♜f3xe5 | ♜g7xe5 |
| 12. ♚d1-d2 | e7-e6  |
| 13. f2-f4  | ♜e5-h8 |



Of course I didn't want to try 13...♜g7 again, and 13...♜c7 became Black's main weapon much later, therefore I decided to repeat a somewhat extravagant move that had brought success in a game against Van der Sterren (Wijk aan Zee 1984). But... it was out of the frying pan into the fire. Eingorn was ready for such a turn of events. He'd predicted it and prepared an unpleasant surprise.

14. c3-c4      ♖f8-e8  
15. e4-e5      f7-f6



16. f4-f5!

And here it is! Eingorn made this move quickly and confidently, and it became clear to me that the Novikov game was going to be far from the end of my suffering.

16. ...      g6xf5

A move that didn't come easily to me. That's easy to understand for any chess player who's ever come up against a home-prepared line. Time and energy is spent not so much on the search for the best possible decision as on self-reproach. After all, it seems as if it was so easy to predict your opponent's reaction but you didn't look far enough, you didn't analyse far enough... Ridding yourself of all those hindering extraneous thoughts isn't so easy, but it's essential. You simply have to train yourself to remember that novelties in the opening are part and parcel of the game, in just the same way as surprises in the middlegame, which occur on almost every move. The move in the game is the correct decision in practice. No good at all was 16...exf5 17.e6, and other options don't promise Black an easy life either: 16...exd5 17.fxg6 hxg6

18.cxd5 ♖xe5 19.0-0 was seen in the game Agzamov-Pribyl, Sochi 1984. Black has a dangerous position. 16...fxe5 17.fxe6 ♖h4+ 18.♔d1 ♖xe6 19.♖xb7 ♖ad8 is good for Black, but 17.fxg6 hxg6 18.♖c2! gives White an unpleasant initiative.

17. ♖b1-b3      ♖e8-e7



Here as well Black's choice isn't easy. For example: 17...fxe5 18.♖g3+ ♔g7 19.d6! (the consequences of 19.♖h6 ♖e7 20.♔b2 ♖c7 aren't so clear) 19...f4 20.♖g4 ♔h8 21.♔b2 ♔f6 22.0-0 ♖g8 23.♖xg8+ ♔xg8 24.g3! with an edge for White, or 17...exd5 18.cxd5 ♖xe5 (the more natural 18...fxe5 is too dangerous on account of 19.♖g3+ ♔g7 20.♖h6 ♖e7 21.d6 ♖f8 22.♖h5! and Black has no satisfactory defence against multiple threats like 23.♖g7 and 23.♔h6) 19.♔b2. It's simply painful to look at Black's compromised position.

18. ♔c1-b2?!

A significant inaccuracy. 16.f5! had been conceived, according to Eingorn, directly during the process of preparing for the game. There was simply no time to polish the details of this 'manual' analysis. Much stronger was 18.d6! ♖g7 19.exf6 ♖xf6 20.♔b2 e5

21. ♖xe5! ♜xe5 22. ♜e3+— as occurred in the game McCombridge-Hjartarson, Grindavik 1984. Curiously that game, which was deservedly recognised as the most important theoretical discovery of *Informator 37*, was played a couple of months before the game we're looking at, but... those were different times, information spread slowly, and the players in the current game reinvented the wheel independently.

18. ... f6xe5  
19. ♜d2-g5+

Here 19.d6 is no longer as strong due to 19...♜g7 20.0-0 (20.♖xe5 ♜xg2 21.♞f1 ♖xe5 22.♞xg2 ♞h8 is unclear, at least) 20...b6 with complex play.

19. ... ♖h8-g7  
20. ♖b2xe5 h7-h6!

Losing is 20...exd5? 21.♜g3 ♜d7 22.♖f6 ♜f7 23.cxd5! ♞h8 24.♖b5.

21. ♜g5-g6 ♜d8-e8

The most reliable move, although also not bad is 21...exd5 22.♖xg7 ♜xg7 23.♜xh6 ♜g5.

22. ♜g6xe8+ ♜e7xe8  
23. ♜b3-g3 ♜e8-e7  
24. ♖e5-d6

24.d6 ♜d7 25.♜g6 ♞h7 26.♜xe6 ♖xe5 27.♜xe5 ♜xd6 also led to equality.

24. ... ♜e7-d7

The best defence! Weaker was 24...♜f7 25.0-0 exd5 26.♖h5! (during the game I was worried about 26.♖f3 but the MF coolly defends: 26...dxc4 27.♖d5 c3 28.♖xc5 ♖d7, evaluating the position as equal. Let that be on the MF's conscience) 26...♜d7 27.♜e1!

♜xd6 28.♜e8+ ♞h7 29.♜e7 and Black can't survive.

25. ♖d6xc5 e6xd5  
26. c4xd5 ♞g8-h7  
27. d5-d6 b7-b6  
28. ♖c5-a3 ♖g7-e5  
29. ♜g3-d3



29. ... ♖c8-a6?

There it is – the long-term consequence of the opening novelty! Having spent a mass of time and energy on overcoming the most complex of problems Black trips up on level ground. After the simple 29...♖b7 30.0-0 ♖e4 he's in no way worse.

30. ♜d3-e3 ♖e5-d4

30...♖xe2 31.♞xe2 ♖f6 32.♜f1 didn't lose immediately, but it doesn't inspire enthusiasm.

31. ♜e3-e6?

31.♜e7+ ♜xe7 32.dxe7 ♖xe2 33.♞xe2 ♞g6 34.♜c1 guaranteed White a solid endgame advantage.

31. ... ♖a6xe2?

A let-off in reply. 31...♖b7! would, as on the 29th move, have saved the game.

32. ♞e1xe2 ♞h7-g7  
33. ♜h1-f1 ♜a8-f8?

More stubborn was 33...♟f7.

<b>34.</b>	<b>♟e2-d3</b>	<b>♟d4-c5</b>
<b>35.</b>	<b>♟a3xc5</b>	<b>b6xc5</b>
<b>36.</b>	<b>♟d3-c4</b>	<b>♟d7-b7</b>
<b>37.</b>	<b>♟f1-e1</b>	<b>1-0</b>

The loss in this game was even more annoying than the previous one. If then I'd been 'hit by a truck', as they say, this time I had no-one to blame but myself. After collapsing at the start I'd also been left almost without a main opening.

However unpleasant such a situation is, you can't consider it an exception. It's something encountered periodically by everyone, including the very greatest chess players. Although that fact provides some consolation, it doesn't help matters. How should you act in such circumstances? A certain universal set of incantations exists: forget about your previous failures, turn over a new leaf, abandon your over-ambitious plans, focus solely on the upcoming game and so on, and so on.

All of that is undoubtedly good advice, but it's much easier to give than follow in practice. In reality the main thing, and at the same time the hardest point on the above list, is TO FORGET. With that goal in mind it's possible to recommend the method of a RADICAL CHANGE or a ZIGZAG. That's well-known in psychology and comes down to the fact that it's useful to dramatically alter the prevailing course of events at a critical moment.

During tournaments the majority of players maintain a certain lifestyle. In critical situations, when normal methods prove useless, it makes sense not simply to make slight alterations to the usual routine, but to completely over-

turn it. As the saying goes, desperate times call for desperate measures.

The notorious Zigzag can sometimes be quite innocent. For example, at the World Junior Championship in 1978, two friends – Artur Jussupow and Sergey Dolmatov – were locked in a fierce battle. After eight games Sergey was leading his friend by a point. Artur wasn't playing very well, so the rest day couldn't have come at a better moment. A couple of hours spent on the football field did him much more good than working on chess. After that Jussupow won four games in a row, but even that proved insufficient to win the tournament. It turned about that Sergey and his coach Dvoretzky had, just in case, also used the Zigzag: they'd devoted the rest day to playing cards. I'm not convinced everyone will consider such a method flawless, but Dolmatov became World Champion.

From a pedagogical point of view a decision taken by Alexander Roshal looks even more debatable. At the European Junior Championship in 1974 his pupil, Sergey Makarychev, was left with meagre chances of winning the tournament. Fortunately, the New Year came just in time and on that occasion the coach persuaded his young charge to drink a full wineglass of vodka. It was a real shock for Sergey! Is it necessary to add who became European Champion!? In a similar situation in Wijk aan Zee, Alexander Motylev once took a swim in the North Sea in January – and as a result won the B-Tournament. I consider my greatest personal achievement in this area to be the 1998 World Championship match. After Anand levelled the

score in the last game Karpov's chances in the tiebreaks seemed hopeless. I managed to convince the multiple World Champion to use a ZIGZAG – instead of his usual preparation he headed to a restaurant with a group of friends to distract himself from troublesome thoughts. Believe me, it wasn't easy at all, but the next day Anatoly managed to win two deciding games in rapid chess.

Returning to 1984, I took a decision which it would be hard to call a Zigzag: I fundamentally rejected the unfortunate Grünfeld Defence. The options I had in reserve were completely unprepared, but nevertheless the drastic change of track justified itself – of course I didn't win the tournament, but I finished the Championship 'on a plus score', which was a very decent outcome.

All that remains is to wish my readers as many successful tournaments as possible, but in case of unforeseen difficulties don't forget about the Zigzag!

Fortunately there were also more pleasant episodes in my career.

[B96]

Leonid Yudasin

Vladimir Tukmakov

Frunze ch-URS 1981 (16)

Game 39

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. e2-e4  | c7-c5  |
| 2. ♘g1-f3 | d7-d6  |
| 3. d2-d4  | c5xd4  |
| 4. ♘f3xd4 | ♘g8-f6 |
| 5. ♘b1-c3 | a7-a6  |
| 6. ♙c1-g5 | e7-e6  |
| 7. f2-f4  | ♚d8-c7 |
| 8. ♚d1-f3 | b7-b5  |
| 9. 0-0-0  | b5-b4  |
| 10. e4-e5 | ♙c8-b7 |



## 11. ♚f3-h3

White has another tempting continuation of the attack: 11. ♘cb5!? axb5 12. ♙xb5+:

A) 12... ♘fd7? would lead Black to catastrophe after 13. ♘xe6! fxe6 14. ♚h3 ♘f7 15. f5! ♙e4 16. fxe6+ ♚g8 17. ♚b3! ♙xc2 (there was an even more spectacular finale after 17... ♘c5 18. ♚c4 d5 19. ♙xd5 ♘xe6 20. ♙c5! ♘f7 21. ♙f1 ♚xf1+ 22. ♚xf1 ♙xc5 23. ♚c4! and despite the large material superiority Black is helpless) 18. ♚xc2 ♚xc2+ 19. ♘xc2 ♘xe5 20. e7 Kr. Georgiev-Kasparov, Malta Olympiad 1980;

B) 12... ♘bd7! 13. ♚h3 (13. ♘xe6? fxe6 14. ♚h3 ♘f7 in the given situation is bad for White) 13...b3! (13...0-0-0?! 14. exf6 ♘xf6 as in the game Bobras-Swiercz, Lublin 2009, gave White an advantage for free) 14. ♚xb3 ♙d5 15. c4 ♘e4 16. ♙he1! ♘g5! (after 16... ♙b7 there's no time: 17. f5! ♘g5 18. fxe6 ♘xe6 19. exd6 with a crushing win) 17. fxg5 ♙xc4! 18. exd6 ♙xb3+ 19. dxc7 ♙xd1 20. ♙xd1 ♙d6 21. ♘xe6 ♘e7 22. ♘d4 ♙f4+ 23. ♘b1 ♘b6 24. ♘c6+ ♘e6 25. ♘d8+ ♘e7 26. ♘c6+ ♘e6 27. ♘d8+ Draw. Miton-Vachier-Lagrave, Dresden Olympiad 2008. An impressive battle, don't you think!?

And now let me introduce you to the Draw Death of Chess! The same spectre with which Lasker and Capablanca frightened the world now looks like this today. Elegant and flawless, it provokes joy among average chess fans, but may only qualify for a condescending smile from the enlightened. Two young chess players, wonderfully prepared, convincingly demonstrated the light and shadow of modern chess.

11. ... **d6xe5**



12. **f4xe5**

12. ♖cb5 here is much weaker, as was demonstrated by the following game: 12...axb5 13. ♙xb5+:

A) The variation 13... ♖c6 14. ♖xe6 (14.fxe5 ♖e4—+) 14...fxe6 15. ♖xe6+ ♙e7 16.fxe5 ♖c8 (16...b3 17.a4! ♖c8 18. ♖xb3) 17. ♖c4 would need extra investigation if it was still relevant. The move in the game below is much stronger;

B) 13... ♙c6! (a resource I found during preparation, which essentially puts an end to the 12. ♖cb5? line) 14.fxe5 Psakhis thought for 1 hr 35 min (!) over this position, but couldn't find a way out – and there wasn't one! 14... ♙xb5 15.exf6 ♙d7! (a winning move, though the MF rates 15... ♙xa2 even higher, as demonstrated in the

game Salman-Zdebskaja, Dresden Olympiad 2008) 16. ♖f5 gxf6 17. ♙xf6 ♙g8 18. ♖xh7 b3 19. ♖d6+ ♙xd6 20. ♙xd6 ♙f8 0-1 Psakhis-Tukmakov, Frunze 1979.

12. ... **♙c7xe5**  
13. **♙g5xf6**



Another theoretically important position.

13. ... **g7xf6!**

As often happens in such positions the static factors are overshadowed by the dynamic ones. Black's centralised queen is much more important than the ruined pawn structure. 13... ♖xf6? 14. ♖cb5!:

A) 14... ♙c5? 15. ♖xe6! axb5 (15...fxe6 16. ♖h5+) 16. ♙xb5+ ♖c6 17. ♙xc6+ ♙xc6 18. ♖c7+ ♖f8 19. ♖xa8 ♖f4+ 20. ♖b1 ♖b8 21. ♙hf1 ♙e7 22. ♖e6 1-0, Chiburdanidze-Tukmakov, Tashkent (1st League) 1980;

B) 14...axb5 15. ♙xb5+:  
B1) 15... ♙e7? 16. ♖g3! ♖d7 17. ♖c7 (17. ♖c6+ ♙xc6 18. ♖d6+ ♙e8 19. ♖xc6 would have won quickly) 17... ♖g5+ 18. ♖b1 ♙d5 19. ♖xd7+ ♖f6 20. ♙hf1+ ♖g6 21. ♖xf7+ ♖h6 22. ♖f5+ exf5 23. ♖xd5 and the position is clear without words, Ferrar-Yudasin, Calgary 1996;

B2) 15...♘c6! (the only move!) 16.♚hf1! (bad, of course, is 16.♘xc6 ♖g5+ 17.♙b1 ♜xb5) 16...♜g5+ 17.♙b1 ♜d5 18.a4! (without consulting the MF it isn't easy to find such a move) 18...0-0-0 19.♘xc6 ♜xd1+ 20.♚xd1 ♚xd1+ 21.♙a2±.

#### 14. ♙f1-b5+!

It's no use crying over spilt milk! The attack has to continue at all costs.

14. ... a6xb5  
15. ♚h1-e1



#### 15. ... ♜e5-f4+

The move that was planned at home, but far from the only one. There's a curious draw after 15...♙xg2!? 16.♜xg2 (but not 16.♜d3? ♜c5 17.♚xe6+ fxe6 18.♘xe6 ♜e5—+ Müller-Brunner, Erfurt 1991) 16...♜g5+ 17.♜xg5 fxg5 18.♘dxb5 ♘a6 19.♘d5 ♚d8 20.♘f6+ ♙e7 21.♘d5+.

Also interesting is 15...♜g5+!? 16.♙b1 and now:

A) 16...♙c5, which the MF insists on for a long time, turns out to have a flaw: 17.♘xe6! fxe6 18.♜xe6+ ♙f8 19.h4!+- ♜xh4 (19...♜h6 20.♘e4 ♙xe4 21.♚xe4) 20.♚h1 ♜g5 21.♚h5!! ♚a6 22.♚d8+ ♙g7 23.♚xg5+ fxg5 24.♜e5+;

B) 16...♚a6! 17.♘dxb5! ♙e7 18.♘c7+ ♙f8 19.♘xa6 ♘xa6 20.♘e4

♜g6 21.♘d6! with an absolutely unclear position.

16. ♙c1-b1 ♚a8-a6!  
17. ♜h3-h5!

After 15...♜g5!? Black wouldn't have had this important resource.

17. ... b4xc3  
18. ♘d4xe6 ♚a6xe6  
19. ♚e1xe6+ ♙f8-e7  
20. ♜h5xb5+ ♙b7-c6  
21. ♚e6xc6 ♘b8xc6  
22. ♜b5xc6+ ♙e8-f8



I'd stopped at this position in my home analysis, assuming Black was fine. That really is the case, but it's not easy for Black to convert his advantage. White's connected passed pawns on the queen-side are potentially very dangerous.

23. ♜c6xc3 ♙e7-d6

Black has a rich choice of roughly equivalent continuations: 23...♙g7!?, 23...♜e5!?, 23...♚g8!?

24. g2-g3 ♜f4-f5  
25. ♜c3-c4 ♜f5-f3  
26. ♚d1-f1

An interesting endgame would arise after 26.♜d5!? ♜xd5 27.♚xd5 ♙e7 28.♚h5.

26. ... ♜f3-e3

27. a2-a4 ♔f8-g7  
 28. ♖f1-d1 ♙d6-e5  
 29. ♖d1-d7 ♖h8-f8  
 30. ♙b1-a2 ♙e3-b6  
 31. c2-c3 ♙g7-h8!?

45. ♙a4-b3 ♙h8-g7  
 46. c4-c5 ♖a7-a1  
 47. b5-b6 ♙c7-e5

After 47... ♙xb6? 48. ♙b2! ♖a6 49. ♖d6  
 White survives.

Freeing the rook for active measures.

32. b2-b4

Dangerous is 32. ♖xf7? ♖b8 33. b4  
 ♖d8! and Black switches to a decisive  
 attack.

32. ... ♙b6-f2+  
 33. ♙a2-b3 ♙f2xh2  
 34. a4-a5

White had fewer chances of survival in  
 the line 34. ♖xf7 ♖xf7 35. ♙xf7 ♙xg3.  
 For example: 36. ♙f8+ ♙g8+  
 37. ♙xg8+ ♙xg8 38. a5 h5 39. b5 ♙g3  
 40. b6 ♙f2 41. b7 ♙a7 42. c4 ♙f7-+.

34. ... ♙h2xg3  
 35. a5-a6 ♙g3-h3  
 36. ♖d7-d3

Also possible is 36. ♖xf7!? ♖xf7  
 37. ♙xf7 ♙xc3+ 38. ♙a4 with drawing  
 chances.

36. ... ♙h3-h1  
 37. b4-b5 ♖f8-g8!  
 38. ♙b3-b4 ♙h1-b1+  
 39. ♙b4-a5 ♖g8-b8  
 40. a6-a7 ♙b1-a1+?!

The time control move and, as often  
 happens, not the best. 40... ♙c7+!  
 41. ♙a4 ♙a1+ 42. ♙b3 ♙xa7 43. ♖d7  
 ♖a8! 44. ♙c2 ♙f2+ would have won  
 on the spot.

41. ♙c4-a4 ♙e5-c7+  
 42. ♙a5-b4 ♙a1xa4+  
 43. ♙b4xa4 ♖b8-a8  
 44. c3-c4 ♖a8xa7+

48. ♙b3-b4 h7-h5  
 49. c5-c6 ♖a1-c1  
 50. ♙b4-b5 ♙g7-g6  
 51. ♖d3-d5 h5-h4  
 52. ♖d5xe5 f6xe5  
 53. c6-c7



Now you get a forced queen ending  
 with an e-pawn for Black. I had no great  
 problems, although the actual text of  
 the game doesn't entirely correspond to  
 that given in the Megabase.

53. ... h4-h3  
 54. b6-b7 h3-h2  
 55. b7-b8 ♙ h2-h1 ♙  
 56. ♙b8-g8+ ♙g6-f6  
 57. ♙g8-d8+ ♙f6-g6  
 58. ♙d8-g8+ ♙g6-f6  
 59. ♙g8-d8+ ♙f6-f5  
 60. c7-c8 ♙+ ♖c1xc8  
 61. ♙d8xc8+ ♙f5-f4  
 62. ♙c8-c4+ ♙h1-e4  
 63. ♙c4xf7+ ♙f4-e3  
 64. ♙f7-a7+ ♙e4-d4  
 65. ♙a7-g7 ♙e3-d3  
 66. ♙g7-g2 e5-e4



67. ♖g2-h1      ♔d3-c2  
 68. ♖h1-g2+    ♔c2-b3  
 69. ♖g2-g8+    ♔b3-c3  
 70. ♖g8-a2?    ♖d4-b4+  
 0-1

While the previous theoretical duel took place in an extremely sharp variation of the Sicilian Defence, against Jussupow I managed to find an interesting possibility which allowed me to avoid undesirable complications.

[D39]

Game 40

Artur Jussupow

Vladimir Tukmakov

Minsk ch-URS 1987 (4)

1. d2-d4      ♘g8-f6  
 2. c2-c4      e7-e6  
 3. ♘g1-f3    d7-d5  
 4. ♘b1-c3    d5xc4  
 5. e2-e4      ♙f8-b4  
 6. ♙c1-g5    c7-c5  
 7. e4-e5

One of the modern tabiyas arises after 7. ♙xc4 cxd4 8. ♘xd4.

7. ...      c5xd4  
 8. ♖d1-a4+    ♘b8-c6  
 9. 0-0-0



The diagram position was quite popular in the 1930s.

9. ...      h7-h6!?

The main subject of theoretical debate in those years was the following variation: 9... ♙d7 10. ♘e4 ♙e7 11. exf6 gxf6 12. ♙h4 and now Black has various moves at his disposal: 12... ♙a5, 12... ♖c8, 12... e5. My interest in this position arose after the game Ziatdinov-Oll, Tashkent 1986, which White won in fine style. The question was whether Black might be able to reject the dangerous complications. By process of elimination the move 9...h6 was found. Analysis showed that it was possible to play like that, and an opportunity soon arose to try it out in practice.

10. e5xf6

The main line, although White also has other options.

10. ...      h6xg5  
 11. f6xg7    ♖h8-g8  
 12. ♘f3xd4



The effect of this find was so great that the variation immediately became extremely popular and was subjected to testing at the very highest level. 12. ♘e4 was tried, when 12...d3!? is interesting (12... ♙e7 13. h4!? gxh4 14. ♘xd4 ♙d7 15. ♘xc6 bxc6 16. ♖xc4 favours White, Beliavsky-Chandler, Linares 1988).

**12. ... ♖b4xc3!**

Only this move is a true novelty. 12...♖d7 13.♗e4! ♜e7 14.♗c2 (14.♗b5!?) 14...f5 15.♗xb4 fxe4 16.♗xc6 ♖xc6 17.♜xc4 had been seen in the game Vidmar-Bogoljubow, Nottingham 1936, where White won.

**13. b2xc3 ♜d8-a5!**

The key to Black's idea! 13...♖d7?! 14.♗b5! ♜xg7 15.♜a3! couldn't possibly satisfy Black.

**14. ♗d4xc6**

And here as well White has a serious choice. After 14.♜xa5!? ♗xa5 15.h4 g4 (15...♜xg7 16.hxg5 ♜xg5 17.♜h8+ ♖e7 18.g3 looks dangerous, but it's possible to play 15...gxh4!? 16.♜xh4 ♖e7) 16.h5 ♜xg7 17.h6 ♜h7 18.♖e2 b6!? 19.♖xg4 ♖b7 Black held the endgame, Timman-Karpov, Amsterdam 1987.

More ambitious is 14.♜xc4 ♖d7 15.♗b5 ♜xg7 16.♗d6+ (less dangerous for Black is 16.♜c5 0-0-0 17.♖c4 ♜b6 18.♜xb6 axb6 with equality, Pr. Nikolic-Beliavsky, Brussels 1988) 16...♖f8 17.♗xb7 ♜a3+ 18.♖b1 ♖e8 19.♜c5+ ♜xc5 20.♗xc5 and Black faces a difficult defence.

**14. ... ♜a5xc3+  
15. ♖c1-b1 b7xc6  
16. ♜a4xc6+ ♖e8-e7  
17. ♜c6-d6+**

17.♜xa8 ♜b4+ =.

**17. ... ♖e7-f6  
18. ♖d1-c1**

18.h4 ♖a6 19.hxg5+ ♖xg5 20.♜d5+! ♖g6 21.♖d3+ led to a quick win in the game Malakhatchko-Perez Felipe, La

Laguna 2008, but the calm 19...♖xg7 20.♜h7+ ♖g6! would have drawn.

**18. ... ♜c3-e5  
19. ♜d6xe5+ ♖f6xe5  
20. ♖f1xc4 ♖c8-b7  
21. f2-f3 ♜g8xg7**

Only now can the opening stage be considered to be over. After successfully avoiding difficulties in the middlegame Black has entered a favourable ending. However, his advantage is more symbolic in character.

**22. ♜h1-e1+ ♖e5-f6  
23. ♖c4-b3**

23.h3 =.

**23. ... g5-g4!  
24. ♜c1-c7**



This allows a positional piece sacrifice. However, after 24.fxg4 ♖xg2 25.♖d1 ♜b8+ 26.♖a1 ♜h7 Black's initiative is quite unpleasant.

**24. ... g4xf3!  
25. ♜c7xb7**

Accepting the challenge! 25.gxf3 ♜b8 favours Black.

**25. ... f3xg2  
26. ♜e1-g1 ♜a8-h8  
27. ♖b3-a4!**

27. ♖xa7 ♜xh2 28. ♜c7 ♜h1  
(28... ♖e5!?) 29. ♜cc1 ♜xg1 30. ♜xg1  
♖f5 31. ♙a4 e5 is bad for White.

27. ... ♜h8xh2  
28. ♖b1-c2?

Natural, but... the losing move. There was a draw after 28. ♜d7 ♖f5 29. ♙c6. Also much stronger was the 'incorrect' king retreat 28. ♖a1.

28. ... ♜g7-g4!  
29. ♙a4-e8

It turns out that the necessary c6-square is inaccessible. And, in general, the a4-e8 diagonal turns out to be too short for the bishop.

29. ... ♜h2-h1

30. ♜b7-b1 ♜h1-h8?

30... ♖e7!—+ 31. ♙b5 ♜b4! would have won immediately.

31. ♙e8-b5 ♖f6-g5  
32. ♖c2-d2 ♜h8-b8

32... ♖h4? 33. ♜h1+.

33. ♖d2-e3?

A mistake in turn in serious time trouble. 33. ♜b3! would have drawn without difficulty.

33. ... a7-a6!  
34. ♙b5-d3 ♜b8xb1  
35. ♙d3xb1 ♖g5-h4  
36. ♖e3-f3 ♖h4-h3  
37. ♙b1-c2 f7-f5  
0-1

For half a century the SCO did a good job of resisting ever-growing competition, but then it was hit by adversity. The colossus that had spawned it – the Soviet Union – first wobbled then crashed to the ground. The profession of chess player lost its alluring aura, and the parents of gifted children put their faith in other priorities. Soviet chess professionals scattered across the globe, passing on their experience and mastery to anyone capable of paying for it. An even more powerful blow was inflicted by modern technology. First computers made information accessible. Anyone tucked away in even the most obscure corner of the world could acquire games in seconds that were previously only available with the permission of the Soviet sporting authorities. Gradually the MF turned into a kind of universal soldier: a sparring partner, consultant and even a coach all in one. In the next chapter we'll try to analyse the fundamental changes brought about in chess by the emergence of the metal monsters, and their influence on the art of preparation.

# Study the classics

## Epilogue to Chapter 1

Is there any point in resorting to historical excursions and digging in the affairs of long gone days in a book devoted to modern methods of preparation? After all, when commenting on individual decisions taken by outstanding historical chess players even the author at times (albeit unwittingly) slipped into a didactic, condescending tone.

Of course, for someone armed with the knowledge and technique of a modern grandmaster the opening wars of the first half of the twentieth century look like innocent schoolyard scuffles, while the preparation methods even of some World Champions can't be described as anything other than amateur. But firstly, a chess player, like any other respectable citizen, should know the history of the state in which he lives. Such knowledge is far from being a pointless burden on your memory, but instead gives you range and depth while resolving more pressing problems. Secondly, this book was conceived by the author as being not only for active or future professionals. It's also intended for chess players who for whatever reason can't devote a lot of time to the game, although they sometimes take part in tournaments. How, in a few hours, can you prepare for a game without a knowledge of the immense edifice of modern theory? How can you avoid the opening tricks of your better-read opponent? Or, on the contrary, how can you surprise an opponent who strikes you as less sophisticated? These questions are by no means idle ones for a chess player of any age or skill level.

Study the classics! That slogan may seem as outdated as the games the author is encouraging you to analyse. After all, modern grandmasters have absorbed and long since surpassed the discoveries of Réti and Nimzowitsch, never mind Steinitz and Tarrasch. However, it's very difficult to learn the principles of prophylaxis and overprotection from the games of the modern idols: harmonious strategic lines are time and again interrupted by tactical zigzags, and a player's ideas are destroyed by the opponent before he's even come close to achieving his goal. In classic games, on the other hand, everything's clear and emphatic, and sometimes so beautiful it takes your breath away, particularly when accompanied by eloquent commentary from the winner. So the apparently simple but logical games of Capablanca are far more instructive than the extremely complex works of modern super-grandmasters.

No-one starts to learn the rules of grammar from exceptions, no matter how beautiful and paradoxical they are, and today's chess at the highest level is simply woven from paradoxes and exceptions. The basic rules were largely formulated back in the

first half of the twentieth century. That's where you should start your education. But where can you find the time for all these now half-forgotten titans of the past? After all, people who like to play but for various reasons haven't managed to graduate from chess universities earn their daily bread doing something completely different. The time they have for studying history is limited, even if the author has managed to convince them with his arguments.

The rules should be learned from simple and logical examples. Therefore I'd recommend the games of Capablanca not Alekhine, Botvinnik not Bronstein and Karpov not Kasparov. And above all, that should be done not by going through everything at once using electronic databases but by studying selected games collections by those wonderful chess players, complete with their own notes. I guarantee it'll bring both benefits and pleasure!

## Chapter 2 – The Computer Era

By the 1970s chess had undergone an enormous journey. Before the Second World War and even for a while afterwards only isolated representatives of the elite could be called professionals in the full sense of the word. The emergence of the SCO and its dominant position in the chess world significantly altered the game's status. Achieving real success while remaining an amateur simply became impossible. Analysing your own games, processing the ever-growing volume of information, working on the opening, never mind physical and mental preparation, demanded total commitment. An enormous amount of time was taken up searching for and systematising information. The appearance of the *Informators*, the precursors of modern databases, significantly eased that workload, but deep opening research still remained a matter for only a few enthusiasts – such labour was too unproductive.

So initially the invasion of the computer into chess seemed less like an occupation and more like charitable aid. Gentle and unobtrusive, it freed people from the tiring and routine labour of looking for and processing enormous reams of information, not to mention the physical burden: volumes of *Informators* and opening guides were pretty heavy.

That generation of chess professionals from the already distant 70s and 80s of the last century appreciated this gift of progress, as they could no longer imagine life without knowing the opening preferences of their future opponents and without searching for weaknesses in their repertoire. Producing a creative portrait of an opponent became an incredibly easy affair, reduced to the correct pressing of certain buttons. So although for some it was sooner, for others later, and for some out of enthusiasm, for others out of necessity, everyone accepted the need for computerisation.

Initially that was limited to databases, as the first computer programs were so strategically helpless that even their undeniable tactical vision only glorified human reason. Up to a point in the duet with humans the MF played a clearly subordinate role, with superiority out of the question. We're not talking, of course, about the hyped shows first with Kasparov and then Kramnik competing against the metal monsters. For the producers of computer technology too much was at stake to allow their charges to fail. In the dealings between chess players and machines there was a clear leader – the man, who set the direction of the search, while the program would obediently follow the leader's directions, making only minor adjustments and refinements.

In recent years, however, that relationship has dramatically and irrevocably altered. Now it's the MF who's taken on the simultaneous role of high priest and guide, leaving the flesh-and-blood creature the opportunity to use the higher mind's rec-

ommendations in practice. And the reason lies not only in the improvement of the programs, although they've become much more skilled in positional subtleties, but in the power of the machines, which is growing not by the day but by the hour. The talent, intuition and experience of a player are becoming ever more helpless against the crude power of the computer. The man in the team, having lost the role of leader, risks being left as only the honorary executor of the machine's will.

If we talk about modern preparation, then the participants of the tandem have remained the same, but the art of interaction has come to the fore. At the very top, where the level of play among the world's best chess players is roughly the same, it's the ability to work well with the MF that sometimes plays a decisive role. The task is extremely complex as the level of the computers involved in the players' preparation is rapidly increasing. Besides common PCs people are ever more likely to resort to using supercomputers that are normally used only for serious scientific research. The role of the technical equipment, particularly in the opening stage, is extremely important.

In the Anand-Topalov World Championship match in 2010, the advantage of the Bulgarian grandmaster, playing at home with access to a supercomputer, was undeniable. But you have to be able to use that power appropriately. It's no accident that his coaching brigade included a computer software specialist. In general, Topalov is one of the world's best players of 'advanced chess' i.e. a combination of player and computer. However, his opponent was also no fool – just two years previously in the match against Kramnik Anand's team turned out to be head and shoulders above their opponents in the opening. They reached a new, higher level of interaction between the player and the MF, although this is obviously an area where huge hidden resources remain for improving opening preparation, and therefore the practical strength of the flesh-and-blood player.

Chess is, in that regard, in line with developments in other sports, where the achievements of modern technology also play an active role. The equipment a sportsman possesses has an ever greater, if not decisive, influence. In swimming, for example, the last few years have seen all the world records redrawn – simply on account of the appearance of new super-swimsuits. A swimmer wearing the costumes of the previous generation is automatically uncompetitive. Similar processes are taking place in speed skating, skiing, light athletics and many other disciplines. Technical progress is becoming more significant in sports where champions were previously determined only by their muscle capacity and speed of reaction.

Returning to chess, we can state that the customary division into chess player-researchers (so valued by Botvinnik) and practical players has all but disappeared. All the routine work of searching for and sorting information, so irritating for practical players, is now done for them by the machine. The painstaking work of fine-tuning variations, in which the researchers always had a distinct advantage, is also undertaken by the obliging MF. As a result, a clear trend has emerged in mod-

ern chess: there are significantly more strong players, but among them you'll find fewer and fewer bright personalities. Where before you couldn't mistake the voices of the outstanding performers, now everyone speaks the same computer Esperanto, and it's only if you listen carefully that you can detect a weak individual accent. When looking through games it's hard, or in fact almost impossible, to accurately determine who's playing. While the style of Botvinnik, Petrosian, Tal, Fischer or Karpov can easily be guessed without looking at the heading, in the best achievements of the modern leaders you can clearly sense the universal computer perfection. For now that's only in the opening stage and the middlegames arising from it, but progress won't stand still!

Under the influence and even the direct impact of chess programs the map of chess openings is gradually changing. The sharpest lines of the Sicilian Defence, which occupied the minds of several generations, are passing into oblivion, as a final judgment has been reached on what had seemed to be absolutely unpredictable complications. The episodic appearance on the highest chess stage of such recently fashionable lines as the Polugaevsky Variation or the 'Poisoned Pawn', often comes down to testing out the erudition and memory of your opponent. Will Black find (or remember) the only path – well, if so, it's a draw. Otherwise – inevitable doom. That's been the fate, or can be expected to be the fate in the near future, of many forced variations. On the other hand, continuations that had long since been filed away and forgotten are occasionally reanimated. The MF discovers a possibility that had been missed by generations of researchers, giving a new lease of life to a variation.

The stunning popularity of such by no means Romantic openings as the Berlin Wall in the Ruy Lopez or the Chebanenko Variation in the Slav Defence, is partly explained by a nostalgia for the chess of the past – when what truly counted was knowledge and an understanding of general laws, rather than a brilliant memory. True, here as well the evaluation of particular key positions is determined not by abstract positional considerations but by perfectly concrete – move-by-move – variations.

The above could be summarised as follows: top-level chess has fundamentally changed. In the twentieth century people loved to say that chess is a combination of science, art and sport. Now art has quietly receded into the shadows and the game is much more about science and sport. Improvisation and imagination are increasingly giving way to painstaking research.

I'll begin my selection of examples of the idiosyncrasies of computer preparation with a game which was particularly memorable for me. It was played at the Olympiad in Calvia. At this point the Ukrainian team had a convincing lead, but there were still six rounds to go and the upcoming encounter was against Armenia – a strong and traditionally difficult opponent for us. I write us, as I had the honour and pleasure of being the coach and captain of the Ukrainian team. There was no doubt about the first two boards, but on the third board the very young Andrey Volokitin was go-



ing to come up against Rafael Vaganian or Smbat Lputian, extremely strong and experienced grandmasters. From the point of view of the opening the difference was insignificant, as both would inevitably choose the French Defence against 1.e4, and also the very same variations. The situation was complicated by the fact that the day before Vaganian had confidently solved all his opening problems in a game against Grischuk. There was no doubt that the successful variation would be repeated. In such a situation relying on improvisation at the board would be the height of frivolity, so Andrey was faced with a choice: to find a serious improvement in White's play or... to sit out the round. He was helped by Sergey Karjakin, who'd rested in the previous match. In the couple of hours that remained until the team order had to be submitted the guys coped brilliantly with that difficult task. Volokitin's right to play in the match was thereby earned – in the full sense of the word.

[C18]

**Andrey Volokitin**

**Smbat Lputian**

Calvia Olympiad 2004 (9)

Game 41

12. ...

**♙c8-d7**

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. e2-e4  | e7-e6  |
| 2. d2-d4  | d7-d5  |
| 3. ♘b1-c3 | ♙f8-b4 |
| 4. e4-e5  | c7-c5  |
| 5. a2-a3  | ♙b4-a5 |

This was the variation that was investigated.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 6. b2-b4   | c5xd4  |
| 7. ♖d1-g4  | ♘g8-e7 |
| 8. b4xa5   | d4xc3  |
| 9. ♖g4xg7  | ♙h8-g8 |
| 10. ♖g7xh7 | ♘b8-c6 |
| 11. ♘g1-f3 | ♙d8-c7 |
| 12. ♙c1-f4 |        |

The famous Fischer-Tal game played at the 1960 Olympiad in Leipzig went 12.♙b5 ♙d7 13.0-0 (13.♙f4) 13...0-0-0 (13...♘e5) 14.♙g5 and the end of the game was unexpectedly quick and spectacular: 14...♘xe5 15.♘xe5 ♙xb5 16.♘xf7 ♙xf1 17.♘xd8 ♙xg5 18.♘xe6 ♙xg2+ 19.♙h1 ♙e5 20.♙xf1 ♙xe6 21.♙xg2 ♙g4+ draw.



13. a5-a6!

A strong move, but not yet a novelty. 13.♙d3!? 0-0-0 14.♙g3 ♙xa5 15.0-0 ♘f5 16.♙xf5 exf5 17.♙xf7 ♙df8 18.♙h7 f4 19.♙xf4 ♙f5 20.♙h4 ♙h8 21.♙g3 ♙hg8 22.♙h4 with a repetition was how the Grischuk-Vaganian game went.

13. ...

**0-0-0**

13...b6!? has also been played more than once. Here's a relatively fresh example: 14.♙g3 0-0-0 15.♙d3 ♙h8 16.♙g7 ♙dg8 17.♙f6 ♙e8 18.0-0 ♙h5 19.♙f4 ♘f5 20.♙xf5 ♙xf5 21.♙e3± Stellwagen-Bartel, Germany Bundesliga 2006/07.

**14. a6xb7+      ♖c8-b8**  
**15. ♔h7-d3      ♜g8-g4**

15...♗g6 16.♙g3 ♗cxe5 17.♗xe5  
 ♗xe5 18.♚d4± f6 19.♞b1 ♜g7  
 20.♞b3 ♚d6 21.♞xc3 ♙c6 22.♙e2 has  
 been known to give White an edge  
 since Matulovic-Osmanagic, Sarajevo  
 1965. Little better is 15...d4 16.♞b1  
 ♜g4 17.♙g3 ♗f5 18.♙e2 ♗a5 19.0-0  
 ♙c6 20.♞b4.

### 16. g2-g3!

The position after 16.♙e3 ♗f5 17.♙c5  
 ♞e4+ (17...♞c4!?) 18.♗d1 (18.♙e2  
 ♚a5) 18...♞c4 (18...♚a5!?) 19.♚xf5  
 ♞xc5 20.♚xf7 d4 as played in the game  
 Ricardi-Forster, Elista Olympiad 1998,  
 looks a little better for White, but it's  
 perfectly possible to improve on Black's  
 play. Even worse is 16.♙g3?! ♞e4+  
 17.♙e2 ♗f5.

**16. ...      ♗e7-g6**  
**17. ♚d3xc3**

17.h3! ♗xf4 18.♚xc3! was also good.

**17. ...      ♗g6xf4**



### 18. h2-h3!!

It was this wonderful idea, found and  
 worked out during preparation, which  
 guaranteed Volokitin's participation in  
 the match.

**18. ...      ♗f4xh3**

It doesn't relieve Black's plight to play  
 18...d4 19.♚c5 ♗xh3 20.♙xh3 ♞e4+  
 21.♗f1 ♗xe5 22.♚xc7+ ♗xc7  
 23.♗g5!.

### 19. ♞h1xh3!

19.♙xh3? ♞c4.

**19. ...      ♗c6xe5**

Other continuations also wouldn't alter  
 the evaluation of the position:

A) 19...♞a4 20.♙e2 d4 21.♚c5 ♞a5  
 22.♚d6±;  
 B) 19...♞e4+ 20.♙e2 ♗xe5  
 21.♚xc7+ ♗xc7 22.♗g5±;  
 C) 19...d4 20.♚c5 ♗xe5 21.♚xc7+  
 (21.♚xe5? ♞e4+! 22.♚xe4 ♚c3+  
 23.♗d1 ♚xa1+ 24.♗d2 ♚c3+=)  
 21...♗xc7 22.♗xe5 ♞e4+ 23.♗d2  
 ♞xe5 24.♞b1 ♙c6 25.♞h7±.

**20. ♚c3xc7+      ♗b8xc7**  
**21. ♗f3xe5      ♞g4-e4+**  
**22. ♗e1-d2      ♞e4xe5**  
**23. ♙f1-d3!**

The home preparation hadn't ended  
 yet, even in this practically won posi-  
 tion.

**23. ...      ♞e5-g5**

Other moves don't help either:  
 23...♗xb7 24.f4+- or 23...d4 24.♞b1  
 ♞b8 25.♞h7 ♙e8 26.♙g6! ♞xb7  
 27.♞xb7+ ♗xb7 28.♙xf7 ♙xf7  
 29.♞xf7+ ♗b6 30.♗d3+-.

**24. ♞h3-h7!      ♙d7-e8**

24...♗xb7!? 25.♞xf7; 24...♞f8  
 25.♞b1.

**25. ♞a1-e1!**

Flawless conversion!

**25. ... e6-e5**

25... ♖xb7 26. ♜xe6+—; 25... ♖b8  
26. ♜h8 ♖xb7 27. ♙b5 ♙xb5  
28. ♜xd8+—.

**26. f2-f4! e5xf4**

**27. ♜h7-h8!**

And again the best move!

**27. ... f4xg3**

**28. ♙d3-a6! g3-g2**

There was also no escape after 28... ♙c6  
29. ♜e7+ (29. ♜xd8? ♙xb7!) 29... ♖b6  
30. ♜xd8 ♙xb7 31. ♜xb7+ ♖xa6  
32. ♜b1.

**29. ♜h8xe8 ♜g5-g8**

**30. ♜e8xd8 ♜g8xd8**

**31. ♜e1-g1 ♜d8-g8**

**32. ♖d2-e2**

Here it was already possible to lower the curtain, but in team tournaments you play on until the end.

**32. ... ♖c7-b6**

**33. ♙a6-d3 ♖b6xb7**

**34. ♖e2-f3 ♖b7-b6**

**35. ♜g1xg2 ♜g8xg2**

**36. ♖f3xg2 ♖b6-a5**

**37. ♖g2-f3 ♖a5-a4**

**38. ♖f3-e3 ♖a4xa3**

**39. ♖e3-d4 ♖a3-b4**

**40. ♖d4xd5 f7-f5**

**1-0**

An excellent model of preparation, which was something you didn't see that often at the time. Winning that game allowed us to avoid defeat in a match that wasn't going well and brought us much closer to overall victory in the Olympiad.

However, if you try to break down the components of White's win then the

role of the MF, although great, nevertheless came down more to the rapid provision of information. In a few hours it was possible to process a huge number of games and determine the direction of the main strike. The conceptual task rested on the shoulders of the people, while it would probably be fair to split the laurels 50:50 for refining the variations until they reached flawless perfection. I'd remind you, though, that this game was played at a time which for current computers can be considered pre-historical.

The next few games took place in World Championship matches with all their attendant circumstances: long months of painstaking preparation, the total dismantling of your opponent's opening repertoire, teams of helpers armed with powerful computers and the other essential attributes of serious professional preparation. As the following famous game shows, all those conditions give no guarantee against tragic oversights. Reliable details and the psychological backdrop to one of the most dramatic games in the history of World Championship matches can be found in Bareev and Levitov's fascinating book, *From London to Elista*. Devoted to Kramnik's matches against Kasparov, Leko and Topalov, it introduces the reader to the fascinating and peculiar professional kitchen, which usually remains inaccessible to outsiders.

**[C89]**

Game 42

**Vladimir Kramnik**

**Peter Leko**

Brissago Wch-m 2004 (8)

**1. e2-e4 e7-e5**

**2. ♘g1-f3 ♘b8-c6**

**3. ♙f1-b5 a7-a6**

- |              |        |
|--------------|--------|
| 4. ♖b5-a4    | ♟g8-f6 |
| 5. 0-0       | ♟f8-e7 |
| 6. ♜f1-e1    | b7-b5  |
| 7. ♟a4-b3    | 0-0    |
| 8. c2-c3     | d7-d5  |
| 9. e4xd5     | ♟f6xd5 |
| 10. ♟f3xe5   | ♟c6xe5 |
| 11. ♜e1xe5   | c7-c6  |
| 12. d2-d4    | ♟e7-d6 |
| 13. ♜e5-e1   | ♚d8-h4 |
| 14. g2-g3    | ♚h4-h3 |
| 15. ♜e1-e4   | g7-g5  |
| 16. ♚d1-f1!? | ♚h3-h5 |

16...♚xf1+ 17.♚xf1 ♟f5 18.♟d2 (18.f3 h6 19.♟d2 ♟xe4 20.fxe4 ♟c7 21.♟g2 c5 22.e5 ♟e7 23.♟e4 cxd4 24.cxd4 a5) 18...h6 19.♜e1 ♜ae8 20.♟f3 ♟h3+ 21.♟g1 ♟g4 22.♟e5 f6 23.♟d3 ♟f5 24.♜d1 ♟g4 25.♜d2.

- |              |        |
|--------------|--------|
| 17. ♟b1-d2   | ♟c8-f5 |
| 18. f2-f3!   | ♟d5-f6 |
| 19. ♜e4-e1!? |        |

Two of Shirov's games on the theme 19.a4!? from the 2006 Tal Memorial are of interest: 19...♟xe4 20.♟xe4 ♚g6 21.♟xd6 (21.♟xg5!?) 21...♚xd6 22.♟xg5 ♚g6!? (22...♜fe8 23.♜e1 ♚g6 24.♟e7 ♜a7 25.♟c5 ♜aa8 26.♟e7 ♜a7 27.♟c5 led to a draw in Shirov-Leko) 23.♚c1 ♟d3 24.axb5 axb5 25.♜xa8 ♜xa8 26.♚f2 ultimately ended in a win for Black in Shirov-Aronian.

Although White's options in this line have been far from exhausted, analysts have switched their focus to 19.♚g2!? ♚g6 20.♜e3 ♜ae8 (20...♟d5 21.♜e1 ♜ae8 22.♚f2? ♟f4!) 21.♟e4 ♟xe4 (the experimental 21...♟d5?! 22.♟xd5 cxd5 23.♟xd6 ♚xd6 24.♜xe8 ♜xe8 25.♟xg5 led to a clear edge for White in Anand-Aronian, Monaco rapid 2007) 22.g4 ♟g3!? (22...♟xg4!?

23.fxe4 is also interesting) 23.hxg3 ♟d3 (the eccentric 23...♟b1 was seen in the original source game, Anand-Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2007) 24.♟d2 ♜xe3 25.♟xe3 ♜e8 26.♜e1 c5 and Black managed to hold, Svidler-Aronian, Linares 2007. Here the situation is a long way from a final verdict.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 19. ...     | ♜a8-e8 |
| 20. ♜e1xe8  | ♜f8xe8 |
| 21. a2-a4!? |        |

21.♟e4 ♟xe4 22.fxe4 ♜xe4 23.♟d2 ♟e6 24.♟xe6 ♜xe6 25.♜e1.

- |         |         |
|---------|---------|
| 21. ... | ♚h5-g6! |
|---------|---------|



This strong move wasn't a surprise for Kramnik either. The previous moves had taken Vladimir almost no time, while Peter was already in serious time trouble.

## 22. a4xb5?!

22.♟e4 ♟xe4 23.fxe4 ♟xe4 24.♟xg5! bxa4! 25.♟c4 ♟d5 26.♟xd5 cxd5 27.♚f6.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 22. ...     | ♟f5-d3 |
| 23. ♚f1-f2? |        |

23.♚d1! ♟e2:

- A) 24.♟c2? ♚h5! (24...♟xd1? 25.♟xg6 hxg6 26.bxa6 ♟c7 27.a7 ♜a8 28.♟c4 ♟d5 29.♚f2!) 25.♚e1 ♟xf3;  
B) 24.♚e1! ♟d3 25.♚d1=.

**23. ... ♖e8-e2**

**24. ♖f2xe2**

24.bxa6 ♖xf2 25.♗xf2 ♖h5 26.♗g1  
♗xg3! 27.hxg3 ♖h3 28.a7 ♖xg3+  
29.♗h1 g4! 30.a8♖+ ♗g7 31.♖a7  
♖e1+ 32.♗g2 gxf3+ 33.♗xf3 ♖f1+  
34.♗g3 ♗h5+ 35.♗h4 ♖h1+ 36.♗g4  
♖g2+ 37.♗xh5 ♖h3+ 38.♗g5 ♖g3+  
39.♗h5 ♗g6 mate.

**24. ... ♖d3xe2**

**25. b5xa6**



**25. ... ♖g6-d3!!**

**26. ♗g1-f2**

26.a7 ♖e3+ 27.♗g2 ♗xf3+! 28.♗xf3  
♖e2+ 29.♗g1 ♗g4 30.a8♖+ ♗g7  
31.♖xc6 (31.♗xg5 ♖f2+ 32.♗h1  
♖xf3+ 33.♗g1 ♖f2+ 34.♗h1 ♖xh2  
mate) 31...♖f2+ 32.♗h1 ♖f1+  
33.♗g1 ♗f2 mate.

**26. ... ♗e2xf3!**

**27. ♗d2xf3 ♗f6-e4+**

**28. ♗f2-e1 ♗e4xc3!**

**29. b2xc3 ♖d3xc3+**

**30. ♗e1-f2 ♖c3xa1**

**31. a6-a7?!**

31.♗xg5 ♖xa6 32.♗d1.

**31. ... h7-h6**

**32. h2-h4 g5-g4**

0-1

Such a thing could, of course, happen (and happened more than once!) during the era of 'manual' labour, but only intrepid explorers back then would have risked going so deeply into a thicket of theoretical variations – they understood too well both the risk of blundering and the cost of that blunder. The appearance of the MF significantly reduced people's sense of danger – the machine has taken on the role of a sapper. And even in this game it did its task perfectly well, but... it lingered a little. Once more, as in the good old days, the human factor was to blame.

In the Kramnik-Anand match the challenger's team worked superbly. It wasn't only that the openings were perfectly chosen – taking into account the psychological portrait of their opponent – but also that the concrete work with the MF turned out to be top notch. It was the complex irrational positions of the Meran Variation that became the World Champion's stumbling block. The following two exciting battles essentially decided the fate of the title.

**[D49]**

**Vladimir Kramnik**

**Viswanathan Anand**

Bonn Wch-m 2008 (3)

Game 43

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 1. d2-d4   | d7-d5   |
| 2. c2-c4   | c7-c6   |
| 3. ♗g1-f3  | ♗g8-h6  |
| 4. ♗b1-c3  | e7-e6   |
| 5. e2-e3   | ♗b8-d7  |
| 6. ♗f1-d3  | d5xc4   |
| 7. ♗d3xc4  | b7-b5   |
| 8. ♗c4-d3  | a7-a6!? |
| 9. e3-e4   | c6-c5   |
| 10. e4-e5  | c5xd4   |
| 11. ♗c3xb5 | a6xb5   |

- |             |          |
|-------------|----------|
| 12. e5xf6   | g7xf6    |
| 13. 0-0     | ♖d8-b6   |
| 14. ♖d1-e2  | ♙c8-b7!? |
| 15. ♙d3xb5! | ♙f8-d6!? |
| 16. ♖f1-d1  |          |

16. ♘xd4!? ♖xd4! (16...♖g8 17.g3! ♖xd4 18.♖d1 – such an inclusion seems to be more in White's favour) 17.♖d1 ♙xh2+! 18.♙xh2 ♖h4+ 19.♙g1 ♙xg2! 20.♙xd7+ ♙e7 21.♙xg2 ♖hg8+ with a threatening attack, which only proves sufficient for a draw: 22.♙f3 ♖h5+ 23.♙e3 ♖c5+ 24.♙d2 ♖ad8! 25.♖f1 (25.♖f1 ♖xd7+ 26.♙e1 ♖xd1+ 27.♙xd1 ♖h5+ 28.♙e1 ♖h2!=) 25...♖xd7+ 26.♙e1 ♖c8! 27.♖e3 ♖a5+ 28.♙d2 ♖xd2 29.♖xd2 ♖e5+ 30.♖e2 ♖a5+=. This convincing but far from obvious variation is given by Anand, but is it within human powers to find and correctly evaluate all those moves at the board!? Kramnik's choice therefore looks perfectly reasonable.

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 16. ...    | ♖h8-g8  |
| 17. g2-g3! | ♖g8-g4! |



### 18. ♙c1-f4

Again, White has a difficult choice, and the task is complicated by the fact that other candidate moves also look very promising. Besides the move in the

game 18.♘d2 looked good, with the threats of 19.♙d7 ♙d7 20.♖g4 and 19.♘c4:



analysis diagram

A) 18...h5?! 19.♘c4 ♖c5 20.b4 ♖d5 21.♘xd6+ ♖xd6 22.f3 ♖d5 23.♙f2 (23.♙b2!?) 23...♖g6 24.♙b2±;

B) However, it seems as though this option had also been taken into account. Anand gives the following impressive variation: 18...♙e7!! (an incredible move! It turns out that the only real threat was 19.♘c4, while 19.♖xg4 was bad for White after 19...♖xb5) 19.♙xd7 ♖ag8! 20.♙b5 d3!? 21.♖xd3 ♖xg3+ 22.hxg3 ♖xg3+ 23.♙f1 ♖xd3 24.♙xd3 ♖d4! 25.♘c4 ♙b4! 26.a3 ♙g2+! 27.♙xg2 ♖g4+, forcing perpetual check.

18.a4!? also looks tempting, but Black has the decent reply 18...♖c5.

- |         |        |
|---------|--------|
| 18. ... | ♙d6xf4 |
|---------|--------|

In contrast to Kramnik Black had no doubt got to the bottom of the tempting 18...♖xf4?! 19.gxf4 ♙e7 20.a4 while still at home.

### 19. ♘f3xd4!?

The consequences of 19.♖xd4 0-0-0! 20.♖ad1 ♙d5! 21.a4 ♙b8 are just as hard to assess as the complications in the game.

# 19. ... h7-h5!

Black's preparation makes a big impression. It's impossible to decide on such a move at the board, especially as it also doesn't lose to play 19...♖g6!?



analysis diagram

Black holds in the forced variations:

A) 20.♙xd7+?! ♖xd7 21.♜xe6+ ♙d6! 22.♜f4 ♖g5 favours Black;

B) 20.♜xe6!? fxe6 21.♞xd7 ♖f8 22.♙d3 ♙e5! 23.♙xg6 hxg6 24.♞c4 ♖e8! 25.♞h7 ♙d4! 26.♞xb7 ♙xf2+ 27.♜f1 ♞xb7. Even the MF takes a long time to trust Black's position, but it's being directed by skilled people! 28.♞xe6+ ♖f8 29.♞xf6+ ♖g8 30.♞xg6+ ♖h8 31.♞f6+ ♖g8 32.♞g5+ ♖h8 33.♞e5+ ♖h7 34.♜xf2 ♞f8+ 35.♜g1 ♞b6+ 36.♜g2 ♞f2+ 37.♜h3 ♞h6+ 38.♜g4 ♞g6+ with perpetual check, Anand;

C) 20.a4!? (upping the pressure) 20...♙d5! 21.♜xe6 ♞xe6 22.♞xd5 (in the line 22.♙xd7+ ♖xd7 23.♞xd5+ ♞xd5 24.♞d1 ♞xd1+ 25.♞xd1+ ♙d6 Black should also hold) 22...♞xe2 23.♙xe2. Here as well the chances are approximately equal.

20. ♜d4xe6 f7xe6  
21. ♞d1xd7 ♖e8-f8  
22. ♞e2-d3



# 22. ... ♙g4-g7!

I suspect this position had also appeared on the computer screens of the Indian grandmaster's team. Bad for Black are both 22...♙c8? 23.♞h7+— and 22...f5? 23.♞c3+—. But 22...♙xg3!? 23.hxg3 h4! seems to lead to a forced draw: 24.♞d6 (bad is 24.♜f1? hxg3 25.fxg3 ♞g5! but it's perfectly possible to play 24.♞d6+ ♞xd6 25.♞xd6 ♙d5) 24...♞c5 25.b4 ♞e5 26.♞d8+ ♞xd8 27.♞xd8+ ♖g7 28.♞e7+ ♖h6 29.♞f8+ ♞g7 30.♞h8+ ♞h7 31.♞f8+. However, the move in the game poses White much more complex tasks, particularly taking into account the energy expended and the fact that time trouble was approaching.

23. ♞d7xg7 ♖f8xg7  
24. g3xf4 ♞a8-d8!  
25. ♞d3-e2!?

25.♞c4? ♞d4—+ is bad, but it was perfectly possible to play 25.♞b3!?

25. ... ♖g7-h6  
26. ♜g1-f1 ♞d8-g8  
27. a2-a4!

Kramnik maintains amazing composure. The b5-bishop has to be defended. That's evident from the following nice variation: 27.f5? ♙g2+! 28.♜e1 ♙c6! 29.♞d2+ ♖h7 30.♙xc6 ♞xc6

31.♔e2 ♖b5+ 32.♔f3 ♜g4 33.♞e1  
 ♜c6+ 34.♔e2 ♜c4+ 35.♔f3 (35.♔d1  
 ♞d4 36.fxe6 ♞xd2+ 37.♔xd2 ♜b4+  
 38.♔d1 ♜d4+-) 35...♞d4-+.

27. ... ♞b7-g2+  
 28. ♔f1-e1 ♞g2-h3!



28...♞c6 or 28...♞d5 were sufficient for a draw, but the unexpected move in the game poses White almost unresolvable problems.

### 29. ♞a1-a3?

The natural and logical defence that was prepared by 27.a4!. Unfortunately for White it turns out to be inadequate. Kramnik probably rejected 29.♞d1 because of the simple 29...♞g4, but the endgame after 30.♜e3 ♜xe3+ 31.fxe3 ♞xd1 32.♔xd1 ♞g2 33.♔c1! is most likely drawn. However, Anand's suggestion of 29...♞f5! creates extremely complex problems. The computer's 30.♜f1! or 30.h3! do, it's true, maintain equality, but are there many chess players in the world capable of something like that at the board!? And all the 'human' moves only worsen the position.

29. ... ♞g8-g1+  
 30. ♔e1-d2 ♜b6-d4+  
 31. ♔d2-c2 ♞h3-g4?!

Offering White a miraculous chance of survival. Stronger was 31...♞f5+! but even with a great deal of time on the clock and a relatively fresh head it's incredibly tough to correctly calculate and assess all the variations.



analysis diagram

A) 32.♔b3 ♞c1! 33.a5 ♜d5+!  
 34.♞c4 ♜b7+ 35.♔a4 (35.♞b5 ♞c2+  
 36.♔a2 ♜h1 and mate is inevitable)  
 35...♞c2!! 36.♞a6 ♜d7+ 37.♜b5  
 ♞c4+ 38.♔b3 ♜d3+ 39.♔a2 ♜b1+  
 40.♔b3 ♞c2 41.♞a2 ♞e4!! 42.♞b7  
 ♜d1 43.♔a3 ♞xb7 44.♜xb7 ♞c4  
 45.b3 ♜d6+ 46.♔b2 ♜d2+ 47.♔a3  
 ♜xa5+ 48.♔b2 ♜c3+ 49.♔a3  
 ♞c5-+ and only here does the situation finally become completely clear;

B) 32.♞d3 ♞g2!? 33.♞xf5 ♞xf2  
 34.♞d3 ♞xe2+ 35.♞xe2 ♜e4+  
 36.♞d3 ♜xf4 37.a5 ♜xh2+ 38.♔b1  
 h4 39.a6 ♜g1+ 40.♔a2 ♜a7-+;

C) 32.♞d3!. The strongest move, though even after the other defences Black's task was far from simple. 32...♞g4!? (almost equivalent to 32...♞g2!? 33.♔b3 ♞xd3 34.♜xd3 ♜xf2 35.♜c3 ♜xf4) 33.♔b3 ♞xd3 34.♜xd3 ♜xf2 with winning chances for Black. All these complex variations are only a fragment of the difficulties Anand would have had to overcome on the path to victory. You can only marvel



at the defensive possibilities of an apparently bad position for White.

### 32. f2-f3?

This weakening is what Black was trying to achieve. Now his task becomes much easier. The only defence was 32.♖d3! ♙f5 33.♙b3 ♙xd3 34.♙xd3 ♙xf2 (after 34...♙xf4 35.♙e3! White's chances certainly aren't worse) 35.♙d8! and White escapes with perpetual check.

32. ... ♙g4-f5+  
33. ♙b5-d3 ♙f5-h3?!

This doesn't let the win slip, but it's too clever. There was a very straightforward win after 33...♙xd3+! 34.♖xd3 (34.♙xd3 ♖g2+) 34...♙c4+.

### 34. a4-a5

Other continuations don't help either: 34.♙e4 ♖g2+ 35.♙d1 ♙g1+ 36.♙e1 ♙xh2!-+ or 34.♙d2 ♖g2 35.♙e2 ♙f5+ 36.♙c1 ♙g1+ 37.♙d1 ♙xh2-+.

34. ... ♖g1-g2  
35. a5-a6 ♖g2xe2+  
36. ♙d3xe2 ♙h3-f5+  
37. ♙c2-b3 ♙d4-e3+  
38. ♙b3-a2 ♙e3xe2  
39. a6-a7 ♙e2-c4+  
40. ♙a2-a1 ♙c4-f1+  
41. ♙a1-a2 ♙f5-b1+  
0-1

[D49]

Game 44

Vladimir Kramnik  
Viswanathan Anand

Bonn Wch-m 2008 (5)

1. d2-d4 d7-d5  
2. c2-c4 c7-c6  
3. ♘g1-f3 ♘g8-f6  
4. ♘b1-c3 e7-e6

5. e2-e3 ♘b8-d7  
6. ♙f1-d3 d5xc4  
7. ♙d3xc4 b7-b5  
8. ♙c4-d3 a7-a6  
9. e3-e4 c6-c5  
10. e4-e5 c5xd4  
11. ♘c3xb5 a6xb5  
12. e5xf6 g7xf6  
13. 0-0 ♙d8-b6  
14. ♙d1-e2 ♙c8-b7!

For now everything's the same as in the third game, which brought an impressive win for Black.

### 15. ♙d3xb5



Repeating the opening from the third game was intriguing in itself: which of the players would be the first to deviate from the beaten path? You might have confidently predicted that it would be Kramnik. Literally a day before the 5th game one of the possible improvements had already been demonstrated: 15.♙f4 ♙c6 (15...b4!?) 16.♖fc1 ♘c5 17.♙g3 (17.♘xd4 ♘xd3 18.♙xd3 ♖d8 19.♙e3 ♙c5 20.♙c2 ♙xd4 21.♙xd4 ♖xd4 22.♙xc6+ ♙xc6 23.♖xc6 0-0 leads to a draw). True, the consequences of 17...♖d8 18.♖c2 ♙b7 19.♖e1 ♖g8 20.♘h4 ♖g5 21.f3 ♘xd3 22.♙xd3 ♖c5 more likely favour Black, Moiseenko-Colovic, Kallithea 2008.

### 15. ... ♖h8-g8!?

A surprise! Anand is the first to side-step, although this move – Rybka's first line – couldn't possibly have been unexpected for Kramnik and his team.

### 16. ♕c1-f4

An absolutely natural reaction. 15...♕d6, played in the third game, hindered the development of this bishop. If 16.♖d1 then after 16...♕d6 you'd get the position from Game 3, but Black would have an extra option: 16...♖a5!? 17.♕xd7+ (17.a4?! ♖xb5! 18.axb5 ♖e5 is dangerous for White) 17...♗xd7 18.♖xd4+ ♗xd4 19.♗xd4 ♕xg2 20.♗d2 ♖h3+ 21.♗h1 ♕g2+ =.

### 16. ... ♕f8-d6 17. ♕f4-g3 ♖f6-f5



And this, undoubtedly the most active and logical continuation, shouldn't in principle have surprised his opponent either. 17...♗e7 is also possible, but less ambitious.

### 18. ♖f1-c1!?

A move that took Kramnik 45 minutes! That's too extravagant for a banal checking of variations. The natural 18.♖fd1? f4 19.♕h4 allows 19...♖a5! and now it's no good to play 20.a4 because of

20...♖xb5! 21.axb5 ♖e5 22.♖xe5 ♖xg2+ 23.♗f1 ♖xh2 24.♖f3 ♖h1+ 25.♗g2 ♖xh4. Perhaps this is the line that was missed in the home preparation! 20.♕xd7+ ♗xd7 also does little good either.

Other attempts don't promise White much either:

A) 18.♖xd4 f4 19.♖xe6! looks promising, but leads to perpetual check after 19...fxe6 20.♗xe6+ ♗f8 21.♗f5+ ♗g7 22.♕d3 ♗c6!? 23.♗xh7+ ♗f8 24.♗f5+;

B) 18.♖e5!? d3! 19.♕xd7+ (19.♗xd3 ♕xe5 20.♕xd7+ ♗f8 favours Black) is attractive only at first glance, as after 19...♗e7 you have to make do with 20.♗xd3 (also unsatisfactory for White are both 20.♖xd3 ♕xg3 21.hxg3 ♖xg3 and 20.♗e1 f4 21.♕h4+ ♗f8) 20...♕xe5 21.♗b5! ♗xb5 22.♕xb5 with approximate equality;

C) 18.a4!? f4 19.♕h4 ♗c5 is interesting, with double-edged play.

### 18. ... ♖f5-f4 19. ♕g3-h4 ♕d6-e7!

A strong move! There was nothing left for the bishop to do on d6. The idea of White's 18th move is revealed in variations like 19...♖a5?! 20.a4 ♖xb5? 21.♗xb5± ♗xb5 22.axb5 and you can't capture on f3 because of mate on c8 or 19...♕d5 20.♖c2 ♗b7 21.♖ac1 ♗f8 (21...♕xf3? 22.♗xf3 ♗xf3 23.♖c8++-) 22.♕c6±.

### 20. a2-a4 ♕e7xh4 21. ♖f3xh4 ♗e8-e7!

Connecting the black rooks.

### 22. ♖a1-a3!

Logical and consistent, but as in Game 3 this manoeuvre doesn't bring White

any joy. The MF's recommendation also doesn't promise any particular dividends: 22.g3!? ♖g5 23.♗xd7 fxg3! 24.hxg3 ♖ag8! 25.a5 ♔d6 26.♖a3 ♖xg3+! 27.♖xg3 ♖xg3+ 28.fxg3 ♔xg3+ 29.♗g2 ♗xg2 30.♔f2 ♔g5 with a guaranteed draw.

22. ... ♖a8-c8  
23. ♖c1xc8

No better is 23.♖d1 ♔c5 (23...♗f6!?) 24.♗xd7 ♔xd7 25.♖ad3 e5 26.♔h5 ♔d5 27.f3 with a totally unclear position.

23. ... ♖g8xc8  
24. ♖a3-a1 ♔b6-c5  
25. ♔e2-g4 ♔c5-e5

25...♔c2!?

26. ♗h4-f3 ♔e5-f6  
27. ♖a1-e1

Avoiding (for now!) the disguised trap 27.♗xd4? ♔xd4 28.♖d1 ♗f6 29.♖xd4 ♗xg4 30.♖d7+ ♔f6 31.♖xb7 ♖c1+ 32.♗f1 ♗e3!—+. That probably took place unconsciously. 27.♗xd7 ♔xd7 28.♗xd4 ♔e7 29.♖d1 ♖c4 led to complete equality.

27. ... ♖c8-c5!?  
28. b2-b4 ♖c5-c3



29. ♗f3xd4?

In other continuations White would experience certain problems. For example: 29.♗xd7 ♔xd7 30.♗d2 ♔g6 or 29.♗d2!? d3, but the move in the game seems to be good in all regards.

29. ... ♔f6xd4  
30. ♖e1-d1 ♗d7-f6  
31. ♖d1xd4 ♗f6xg4  
32. ♖d4-d7+ ♔e7-f6  
33. ♖d7xb7 ♖c3-c1+  
34. ♗b5-f1

At first glance it looks as though it's Black who needs to find a way of saving himself.

34. ... ♗g4-e3!

And there really isn't any salvation but, alas, for White! The counter combination wasn't that complex, but it's very elegant.

35. f2xe3

35.h3 ♖xf1+ 36.♗h2 ♖xf2—+.

35. ... f4xe3

0-1

The line 36.♖c7 ♖xc7 37.g3 ♖c1 38.♗g2 ♖c2+ 39.♗f3 ♖f2+ is more than convincing.

Those encounters are wonderful examples of the interaction between man and machine. A psychologically correct choice of variation and a precise prediction of the possible course of events — those are undoubtedly human prerogatives. But the ensuing positions are so sharp, and the cost of each move so great, that any misfire could lead to precisely the opposite result. Here the MF performed flawlessly, though naturally when led by skilled operators.

In the match against Topalov, however, they were faced by an opponent who was just as sophisticated in the art of preparation. The Bulgarian grandmaster's team was in no way inferior to their opponents and, at times, they seized the opening initiative. In the following game an original idea of Ivanchuk's acquired deep computer support.

[E11]

Game 45

**Viswanathan Anand****Veselin Topalov**

Sofia Wch-m 2010 (7)

- |           |         |
|-----------|---------|
| 1. d2-d4  | ♘g8-f6  |
| 2. c2-c4  | e7-e6   |
| 3. ♖g1-f3 | d7-d5   |
| 4. g2-g3  | ♙f8-b4+ |

A 'novelty'! In the three previous games in the match Topalov had always chosen 4...dxc4 and although objectively Black's positions weren't that bad the result was disappointing: only a single draw. And in general, in recent years the Bulgarian's statistics in the Catalan leave something to be desired. It was high time for a change of variation.

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 5. ♙c1-d2 | ♙b4-e7 |
| 6. ♙f1-g2 | 0-0    |
| 7. 0-0    | c7-c6  |
| 8. ♙d2-f4 |        |



8. ...

**d5xc4!?**

The most principled reply, but Topalov was playing this way for the first time. Twice he suffered failures in the sharp ending after 8...b6 9.♘c3 ♙a6 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.♖c1 ♘c6!? 12.♘xd5 ♚xd5 13.♘e5 ♘xd4 14.♙xd5 ♘xe2+ 15.♚xe2 ♙xe2 16.♙xa8 ♚xa8 17.♖fe1 ♙b5 18.♖c2 ♘d5 19.♖ec1 (Ponomarev-Topalov, Sofia 2005; Kramnik-Topalov, Dortmund 2005). Later he played 8...♘bd7 against Radjabov and Kozul.

9. ♘f3-e5



9. ...

**b7-b5!**

Ivanchuk's idea. The position arising after 9...♘d5 10.♘xc4 ♘xf4 11.gxf4, as Black usually plays, could hardly have suited Topalov: it's essential to play very accurately in order to neutralise White's slight edge. The move in the game dramatically alters the situation on the board.

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 10. ♘e5xc6 | ♘b8xc6  |
| 11. ♙g2xc6 | ♙c8-d7N |

Against Gelfand (Nice 2010 blindfold) Ivanchuk played 11...♙a6 and after 12.♙xa8 ♚xa8 13.♚c2 ♚c6! 14.♙g5 ♙b7 15.f3 e5!? (15...h6!?) 16.♙xf6 ♚xf6 he got sufficient compensation

for the exchange. It's hard to say if the continuation chosen by Topalov is better. Instead of taking the long diagonal the bishop remains on the c8-h3 diagonal, but it also finds work to do there.

**12. ♖c6xa8 ♜d8xa8**



An unconventional position. Black doesn't even have a pawn for the sacrificed exchange, but the two fearsome bishops and the weakening of White's king position give him some compensation.

### 13. f2-f3

Covering the light squares in advance. If 13. ♖c2 (by analogy with the Gelfand-Ivanchuk game) the virtue of Black's 11th move makes itself known: 13...e5! 14. ♖xe5 ♖h3 15.f3 ♖xf1 16. ♖xf1 ♜d5 After winning back the exchange Black has decent compensation for the pawn. The cunning MF suggests 13.a3!? e5 14. ♖xe5 ♖h3 15.f3 ♖xf1 16. ♖xf1 but in this case as well, after 16...♜d5 17. ♜c3 f6 18. ♖f4 ♜xf4 19.gxf4 the situation isn't so clear.

**13. ... ♜f6-d5**  
**14. ♖f4-d2 e6-e5!?**

Ivanchuk also implemented a similar idea.

### 15. e2-e4

15.dxe5 ♖h3 16. ♖e1 ♜d8 looks too dangerous.

**15. ... ♜d7-h3!?**  
**16. e4xd5 ♖h3xf1**  
**17. ♖d1xf1 e5xd4!**

Of course not 17...♖xd5? 18. ♖e2!.

**18. a2-a4! ♖a8xd5**  
**19. a4xb5 ♜d5xb5**



Up until this point Topalov had taken only 3 minutes, emphatically demonstrating to his opponent that he had 'everything under control'. It's always unpleasant to find yourself under such pressure, although experience undoubtedly told Anand that Black's activity should only, in the best case scenario, be sufficient for a draw.

### 20. ♜a1xa7!?

A wise decision! Given that after 20...♖c5 there's 21. ♜a5 why not take another pawn?

**20. ... ♜f8-e8**  
**21. ♖g1-h1!?**

An unexpected prophylactic move, finally causing Topalov to think. The outcome of the theoretical duel can undoubtedly be summed up as a victory

for the Bulgarian grandmaster – although there's a lot of play to come, the evaluation of the position is: dynamic equality.

**21. ... ♖e7-f8!?**

Equality was maintained by the obvious 21...♖xb2. For example: 22.♖e1! (22.♖xc4 ♖xb1+ 23.♔g2=) 22...h6 (22...♔f8? 23.♖xe7 ♖xe7 24.♙b4+–) 23.♘a3 c3 24.♙c1!? ♖b3!? 25.♖xe7 ♖xe7 26.♖xe7 ♖d1+ 27.♔g2 ♖xc1 28.♖e8+ ♔h7 29.♖e4+. Trying to exploit his great time advantage Topalov takes some real risks, avoiding simplifications.

**22. ♖a7-c7!?      d4-d3!**  
**23. ♙d2-c3!      ♙f8-d6!**



**24. ♖c7-a7!**

If 24.♘a3?! then Black could, if he wished, make an elegant draw: 24...♖d5 25.♖xc4 ♙xa3! 26.♖d4 ♖xd4! 27.♙xd4 d2 28.♙c3 ♖e1.

**24. ...      h7-h6**

Now overly active play might get Black into trouble: 24...♖h5?! 25.♘d2! ♖e2 (25...♙xg3 26.♖g1! ♙e5 27.♖a5!+–) 26.h4 h6 27.♖a5 but 24...♙b4!? is interesting.

**25. ♘b1-d2**

Low on time, Anand prefers solidity. 25.♖h3! posed more problems, but Black was holding there as well: 25...♙b4 26.♖d7 ♖xd7 27.♖xd7 ♖e2! 28.♙xb4 ♖xb2 29.♘d2 ♖xb4 30.♖d4 ♖a4 31.♘xc4 ♔h7.

**25. ...      ♙d6-b4!**

An only move! The d3-passed pawn and the activity of the black pieces ensure Black has sufficient compensation for the piece.

**26. ♖a7-a1!**

White is also on top of his game! After the careless 26.♘e4? ♙xc3 27.bxc3 f5! his opponent would have seized the initiative.

**26. ...      ♙b4xc3**  
**27. b2xc3      ♖e8-e2**  
**28. ♖a1-d1!**

Now it's Anand who makes an only move. After 28.♘e4? f5 White would have big problems.

**28. ...      ♖b5-a4**

One of the many ways of maintaining equality.

**29. ♘d2-e4**

29.♖a1!?

**29. ...      ♖a4-c2**

Or 29...f5 30.♖d2 fxe4 31.♖xe2 dxe2 32.♖xe2 ♖a1+ 33.♔g2 ♖xc3 34.♖xe4 with a draw.

**30. ♖d1-c1      ♖e2xh2+**  
**31. ♔h1-g1      ♖h2-g2+**  
**32. ♖f1xg2      ♖c2xc1+**  
**33. ♖g2-f1      ♖c1-e3+**

33...d2! 34.♘xd2 ♖xd2 35.♖xc4 was simpler.

34. ♖f1-f2      ♜e3-c1+  
35. ♖f2-f1      ♜c1-e3+

35...d2!=.

36. ♔g1-g2!

Now it's Anand who has a symbolic advantage.

36. ...      f7-f5  
37. ♘e4-f2      ♔g8-h7  
38. ♖f1-b1      ♜e3-e6  
39. ♖b1-b5

39. ♖a2!?

39. ...      g7-g5!?  
40. g3-g4      f5xg4  
41. f3xg4



41. ...      ♔h7-g6

The push 41...d2!? was probably also sufficient for a draw, for example: 42. ♖f5+ ♖xf5 43. gxf5 g4! 44. ♔g3 h5 45. ♔f4 ♔g7 46. ♘d1 ♔f6 47. ♘e3 with equality.

42. ♖b5-b7

If 42. ♖a4!? then Black maintains the balance with the help of 42...♖d5+ 43. ♔f1 ♖e6.

42. ...      d3-d2!  
43. ♖b7-b1+      ♔g6-g7  
44. ♔g2-f1      ♜e6-e7

The threatening d2-passed pawn fully compensates for the piece.

45. ♔f1-g2      ♜e7-e6  
46. ♖b1-d1      ♜e6-e3  
47. ♖d1-f3      ♜e3-e6  
48. ♖f3-b7+      ♔g7-g6  
49. ♖b7-b1+      ♔g6-g7  
50. ♖b1-d1      ♜e6-e3  
51. ♖d1-c2      ♜e3-e2  
52. ♖c2-a4      ♔g7-g8  
53. ♖a4-d7      ♔g8-f8  
54. ♖d7-d5      ♔f8-g7  
55. ♔g2-g3      ♜e2-e3+  
56. ♖d5-f3      ♜e3-e5+  
57. ♔g3-g2      ♜e5-e6  
58. ♖f3-d1      1/2-1/2

This same position was already on the board after White's moves 46 and 50, so it's a draw. A great battle!

Of course, the examples given could be considered models which aren't so often achieved by 'mere mortals'. But everyone has computers, and the desire and ability to work with them competently is something many people demonstrate.

The following memorable examples differ in their methodology. The first group consists of examples of general opening preparation. As a rule, they encompass popular openings and variations. After all, chess fashion is just as changeable and capricious as high fashion, but every self-respecting professional is obliged to be up-to-date with its unexpected twists and turns. For example, in a tournament in Linares or Moscow an interesting opening idea is played. Almost simultaneously the critical position appears on hundreds of computer screens in different corners of the globe. The novelty is immediately subjected to comprehensive and thorough testing. If the verdict is pos-

itive, then on the very next day a variation that sometimes has been forgotten and abandoned by everyone as unpromising can obtain a new lease of life.

A similar situation can occur in some provincial open, although in that case the path from obscurity to fame can take a few days. That, or something like that, is how opening hits of the season are born. Sometimes the popularity of a particular variation lasts for months, more rarely for years. The probability that analysis of such favoured variations will be required is very high and the surprise factor is ruled out, so the research isn't superficial, but instead deep and broad. All the details and ramifications are studied, while 'mines' are planted in the most unexpected of places.

Such an approach demands thoroughness and is time-consuming, so all the work is done, as a rule, in good time during the preparation for an event. To illustrate such preparation we'll start with a game of Kasimdzhanov's.

[D46]

Game 46

**Rustam Kasimdzhanov**  
**Levon Aronian**

Jermuk 2009 (5)

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4  | d7-d5  |
| 2. c2-c4  | c7-c6  |
| 3. ♘g1-f3 | ♘g8-f6 |
| 4. ♘b1-c3 | e7-e6  |
| 5. e2-e3  | ♘b8-d7 |
| 6. ♙f1-d3 |        |

As we saw, Kramnik also played in this manner against Anand. We can confidently assume that Kasimdzhanov, as one of Anand's coaches, made use of certain ideas from that match in this game.

- |        |       |
|--------|-------|
| 6. ... | d5xc4 |
|--------|-------|

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 7. ♙d3xc4   | b7-b5  |
| 8. ♙c4-d3   | ♙f8-d6 |
| 9. 0-0      | 0-0    |
| 10. ♖d1-c2  | ♙c8-b7 |
| 11. a2-a3   | a7-a6  |
| 12. b2-b4   | a6-a5  |
| 13. ♚a1-b1  | a5xb4  |
| 14. a3xb4   | ♖d8-e7 |
| 15. e3-e4!? |        |

After 15. ♖b3 White can't claim an advantage, but it's worth considering 15. ♙d2!? so that after 15... ♙xb4 you can play 16.e4.

- |             |       |
|-------------|-------|
| 15. ...     | e6-e5 |
| 16. ♘c3-e2! |       |

The line 16.dxe5 ♘xe5 17. ♘xe5 ♙xe5 (17... ♖xe5 is good as well) 18. ♘e2 ♖e6 19.f4 ♚a2, which was encountered, in particular, in the blindfold game Gelfand-Anand, Nice 2008, can be considered a dead-end: Black is absolutely fine.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 16. ...    | ♙d6xb4 |
| 17. ♘e2-g3 |        |



- |         |       |
|---------|-------|
| 17. ... | g7-g6 |
|---------|-------|

People have also played 17...exd4 18.e5 ♘xe5 19. ♘xe5 c5 20. ♚xb4 cxb4 21. ♚e1 ♖e6 and although White's position looks promising, at least to me, the MF doesn't share that evaluation.



White also didn't have great success in practice. Neither 22.♖b1 (Eljanov-Gustafsson, Dresden Olympiad 2008), nor 22.♘f5, seen in the game Naer-Galkin, Kolontaevo 1997, brought White success. Nevertheless, Black chooses another path, which had also been tried at the highest level.

**18. d4xe5 ♘f6-g4**



**19. e5-e6!?**

White is the first to step off the theoretical path, and although the investigation of this position is only just beginning there's no doubt whatsoever about the seriousness of Kasimdzhanov's preparation.

That immediately poses a few questions. Firstly: why didn't he follow the previous game? That went: 19.♙g5 ♗c5 20.e6 ♘de5 (20...fxe6 21.♖b3 would lead, by a transposition of moves, to the position in the game we're looking at) 21.♘xe5 ♘xe5 22.♙f6 Svidler-Karjakin, Baku 2008. Perhaps because of 22...♘xd3 (22...♖xc2 23.♙xc2 ♙d6 24.♙b3 led to an advantage in the game mentioned above, and eventually to a win for White) 23.♖xd3 fxe6! (weaker was 23...♖d6 24.♖f3! fxe6 25.e5, and things are bad for Black) and now after 24.e5 ♖c3 you get an extremely complex position which is very hard

to evaluate. It's possible to assume that Kasimdzhanov wanted to avoid it. However, with the move order he chose there's also another possibility, which was used a few rounds later by Leko.

**19. ... ♙f7xe6**  
**20. ♙c1-g5 ♖e7-c5**

It seems this was the position White was striving for in his preparation. Aronian, more likely than not, had limited his analysis to the Svidler-Karjakin game and prepared an improvement there – perhaps the one we already mentioned. At the board he ended up having to solve extremely difficult tasks which his opponent had prepared at home.

In Round 11 Leko demonstrated a hidden flaw in White's 19th move: 20...♖d6!. With the move order chosen by Svidler that possibility didn't exist! Was it a conscious choice by Kasimdzhanov, or did he underestimate 20...♖d6! during his preparation? The question is rhetorical as professionals don't usually reveal such secrets. In any case, on this occasion Rustam brilliantly guessed correctly! The end of Leko's game is also of interest: 21.♙e2 ♜f7 22.♜bd1 ♖f8 23.♘d4 (23.h3 has also been tried, in Pashikian-Esen, Bursa 2010. Although White did manage to win I don't think this move seriously alters the evaluation of the position) 23...♘xf2 24.♘xe6 ♘xd1 25.♘xf8 ♙c5+ 26.♙h1 ♜xf1+ 27.♘xf1 ♘f2+ 28.♙g1 ♘h3+ 29.♙h1 ♘f2+ 30.♙g1 ♘h3+ Kasimdzhanov-Leko, Jermuk 2009. If he'd wanted Black could have continued the struggle with 30...♘g4+!? 31.♙h1 ♜xf8 but he considered winning the theoretical duel sufficient success.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 21. ♖c2-b3  | ♜d7-e5 |
| 22. ♖b3xe6+ | ♜f8-f7 |
| 23. ♜f3xe5  | ♜g4xe5 |
| 24. ♜d3-e2  | ♜c5-d6 |

Black also didn't manage to resolve all his problems after 24...♜c8 25.♖b3 ♜c3 26.♜e3 ♖a3 27.f4! Morozevich-Navara, Reggio Emilia 2010/11.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 25. ♖e6-b3  | ♜b4-c5 |
| 26. ♜b1-d1  | ♜a8-a3 |
| 27. ♖b3-c2  | ♜c5-d4 |
| 28. ♜g5-e3! |        |

Following Rybka's first line in this almost forced variation isn't that difficult, but it was much more difficult to correctly assess the consequences of the forced play – after all, for a long time the MF still maintains its optimism about Black's position.

28. ... ♜a3xe3

Both 28...c5 29.♜xb5 and 29...♜a4 30.♜h1! (with 31.f4 to follow) were even worse for Black.

29. f2xe3 ♜d4xe3+  
30. ♜g1-h1



30. ... ♖d6-e7?

The MF suggests the best defence is the following variation: 30...♖a3 31.♜d8+ ♜g7 32.♜xf7+ ♜xf7 33.♜b8 ♜a6

34.♜f1 ♜a7 35.♜h8 ♜g7 36.♜e8 ♖d6 37.♖a2 ♜c5. I give that possibility not as a realistic alternative to the game – it's beyond human capabilities – but as the opinion of one of the actual participants in the discussion. The contribution of the MF to White's success is difficult to overestimate.

However, I can't rule out that Rustam had also looked at that option in his preparation! How much time he spent at home studying all the nuances and ramifications is something only he himself knows, but he played out his analysis at the board very quickly.

31. ♜f1xf7 ♜e5xf7

It doesn't help to play 31...♖xf7 32.♖c3! ♜f4 33.♜f1+.

32. ♖c2-b3 ♜e3-b6  
33. ♜e2-g4

At this point it would essentially be possible to lower the curtain.

33. ... ♜g8-h8  
34. ♜d1-d7 ♖e7-c5  
35. ♖b3-b1

The MF prefers 35.♜e2! ♜e5 36.♜xb7 ♜xg4 37.♖b2+ ♜e5 38.♜xb6 ♖xb6 39.♖xe5+.

35. ... ♜f7-e5  
36. ♜d7xb7 ♜e5xg4  
37. h2-h3 ♜g4-f6  
38. e4-e5

Here the machine's choice of 38.♖a1 ♖d4 39.♖a8+ ♜g8 40.♜xb6 ♖xb6 41.♖a1+ can be considered more elegant, but the MF had already made its contribution to White's victory.

38. ... ♖c5xe5  
39. ♜b7xb6 ♖e5xg3

40. ♖b1-a1      ♗g3-f4  
41. ♜b6-b7      1-0

A superb achievement! The greater part of the work was probably done at home, but White also acted flawlessly at the board.

[D46] Game 47

**Rustam Kasimdzhanov**  
**Ivan Cheparinov**

Jermuk 2009 (9)

1. d2-d4      d7-d5  
2. c2-c4      c7-c6  
3. ♟g1-f3      ♟g8-f6  
4. ♟b1-c3      e7-e6  
5. e2-e3      ♟b8-d7  
6. ♖d1-c2!

The exclamation mark isn't for White's move itself. It's addressed to Rustam Kasimdzhanov, or rather, to the breadth and depth of his preparation. Against Aronian he played 6.♟d3 and also demonstrated both wonderful erudition and fresh ideas.

6. ...      ♟f8-d6  
7. ♟f1-d3      0-0  
8. 0-0      d5xc4  
9. ♟d3xc4      a7-a6  
10. ♜f1-d1      b7-b5  
11. ♟c4-e2      ♖d8-c7  
12. ♟c3-e4!?

A continuation that had for a long time been on the margins of theory, but has gained unexpected popularity. What adds significance and spice is that Kasimdzhanov was part of Anand's coaching team during the Kramnik match, and the Meran played almost a decisive role in that encounter. Cheparinov is also on far from the lowest rung of the guild of opening researchers. Previously the start-

ing point for exploration was the position after 12.e4 e5.

12. ...      ♟f6xe4  
13. ♖c2xe4      ♟c8-b7

Avoiding 13...e5 14.♖d3!? (at the time this was a novelty) 14...exd4 15.♖xd4 ♟e7 16.♖f4! ♖xf4 17.exf4 with a small but persistent edge for White, Kasimdzhanov-Aronian, Nalchik 2009.

14. ♟e2-d3      g7-g6!

14...♟f6 15.♖h4 c5 16.e4 cxd4 17.♟g5 e5 18.♟xf6 gxf6 19.♟xd4!±, as occurred in the game Volzhin-Malakhatko, Swidnica 1998, was probably familiar to Cheparinov.

15. ♖e4-h4      c6-c5  
16. ♟f3-g5      h7-h5



Probably the most principled move. The calmer 16...♟f6 17.dxc5 ♖xc5 (17...♟xc5?! 18.b4) 18.♟d2 h5?! (here you could limit yourself to the restrained 18...♜fc8) 19.♟c3 e5 20.♟e4! (20.♟e4?? ♟xe4 21.♟xe4 ♟e7—+ occurred in the blitz game Golod-Gelfand, Netanya 2009) 20...♟xe4 21.♟xe4 ♟xe4 22.♖xe4.

17. g2-g4!

Only in this manner can you attempt to cast doubt on Black's previous move.

17. ♖e4 ♙xe4 18. ♙xe4 ♜ae8 19. ♙f3 (it's no good to play 19. ♙d2 ♙e7 20. ♚g3 ♚xg3 21. hxg3 ♜f6) 19... ♙e7 20. ♚e4 ♜f6 21. ♚c2 ♜c8 led to equality in Onischuk-Shulman, Montreal 2009.

17. ... ♜d7-f6  
18. g4xh5 ♜f6xh5

The attempted counterattack doesn't work: 18... ♚c6? 19.d5! ♚xd5 20.e4 ♚c6 21.hxg6 fxg6 22. ♚h6 and Black's in trouble.

19. ♙d3-e2 ♙g8-g7

From here onwards, on literally every move the players (this applies to a greater extent to Black) have a serious and critical choice to make. Judging by the clocks the Bulgarian chess player had long since switched to 'manual control', taking decisions directly at the board. Up to a point his opponent's task was easier: his time was mainly spent on remembering. Serious consideration was required by 19... ♜f6!? 20.dxc5 ♚xc5 (worse is 20... ♙xc5 21.b4 ♙d6 22. ♙b2 e5 23. ♙f3 with a minimal edge for White) 21. ♙d2 ♙g7 (another possibility is 21... ♚f5!? 22. ♙c3 ♙e5 23. ♙b4 ♙xb2 24. ♜ab1 ♙e5) 22. ♜ac1 and again Black has a tricky choice:



analysis diagram

A) The situation becomes less predictable after 22... ♙xh2+!?:

A1) In the extremely pretty lines like 23. ♙xh2 ♚d6+ 24. ♚f4 ♜h8+ 25. ♙g3 e5! (weaker is 25... ♜h5? 26. ♙xh5 ♜xh5+ 27. ♙g4 f5+ 28. ♙h4 ♜xf4 29. ♙c3+ e5 30.exf4! ♚b6 31. ♙xe5+ ♙g8 32. ♜d2 ♜c8 33. ♜c7! and White wins) 26. ♚b4 ♜h5+!! 27. ♙xh5 ♜xh5 28. ♚xd6 ♜xg5+ 29. ♙h4 ♜h5+ 30. ♙g3 Black miraculously survives;

A2) 23. ♙f1! ♚f5 24.e4 ♙xe4 25. ♙xe4 ♙xe4 26. ♙h6+ ♙g8 27. ♙g4 ♚e5 28. ♙f3. Here the situation is critical for him;

B) 22... ♜h8! 23. ♚xh8+! ♜xh8 24. ♜xc5 ♙xc5 25. ♙c3 and the end-game is more pleasant for White. Even in relaxed conditions with the reliable MF on hand it's extremely difficult to navigate through this labyrinth of complex variations. You can only sympathise with Cheparinov, who was forced to take decisions at the board while not knowing to what depth his opponent's analysis stretched.

20. d4xc5 ♙d6-e5!?

From a practical point of view this is a sensible decision. Now at least Black doesn't have to fear unpleasantness on the long diagonal. Surprisingly, however, from this point on things steadily deteriorate for Black. It was much harder to assess the consequences of 20... ♚xc5!? 21.b4 ♙xh2+ (leading to a worse ending was 21... ♚xb4 22. ♚xb4 ♙xb4 23. ♜d7 ♙d5 24.e4 ♙c6 25. ♙xe6+ ♙g8 26. ♙xf8 ♙xf8 27. ♜c7 ♙xe4) 22. ♙f1!? (there's an unexpected conclusion after 22. ♙xh2 ♚e5+ 23.f4 ♚xa1 24. ♙xh5 ♜h8 25. ♙xe6+ ♙g8 26. ♜d8+ ♜xd8

27. ♖xd8+ ♔h7 28. ♕g5+ ♔g7  
29. ♕e6+ draw!) 22... ♜e5 and the outcome of the battle is totally unpredictable.

**21. f2-f4                      ♙e5-f6**  
**22. ♙c1-d2                  ♜c7xc5**

Avoiding a new temptation: 22... ♙xb2 23. ♜ac1!. Undoubtedly the strongest reply. 23... ♙d5!? (23... ♙xc1?! 24. ♙xc1! is dangerous for Black, but it's perfectly possible to play 23... ♜ad8 24. ♜c2 ♙f6 25. c6 ♙xc6 26. ♜dc1 ♜d6) 24. ♙xh5 ♜h8 25. ♜f2 ♜xh5 26. ♙a5 ♜xa5 27. ♜xb2+ ♔g8 28. c6 ♜c7 29. ♜f6 ♜e8 Black is faced with a difficult defence.

**23. ♜a1-c1**

It's hard to say at what point Kasimdzhanov's analysis ended, but soon White's enormous advantage on the clock vanished and the decisive events took place in mutual time trouble.

**23. ...                              ♜c5-d5**  
**24. ♜h4-h3!**

Of course not 24. ♙f3? ♜xf3!.

**24. ...                              ♜f8-h8!**

The natural 24... ♜ac8 is a road to ruin: 25. ♜xc8 ♜xc8 26. ♙f3 ♜d7 27. ♙b4 ♜c7 28. ♙xh5 ♜h8 29. ♜xe6! ♙xg5 30. ♜d7 ♜c1+ 31. ♙d1 ♜xd1+ 32. ♜xd1 fxe6 33. ♜d7+.

**25. ♙d2-c3                  ♜d5xa2!?**

It would be a premature admission of failure to play 25... ♕xf4?! 26. ♙xf6+ ♜xf6 27. exf4 ♜xh3 28. ♜xd5 ♙xd5 29. ♕xh3 ♙xa2, although White would face technical difficulties converting his advantage.



**26. ♜d1-d7?**

White fails to choose the best of a few tempting options. 26. ♕xe6+? ♔g8! was no good, but after the zwischenzug 26. ♜a1 ♜b3 27. ♕xe6+! is much stronger, as if 27... ♔g8 there's 28. ♕c5. All that's left is 27... ♜xe6 28. ♜xe6 fxe6 29. ♜d7+ ♔h6 30. ♜xb7 ♙xc3 31. bxc3 e5! and Black should hold.

The most forcing option was 26. ♕xf7! ♕xf7 (losing is 26... ♕xf4 27. ♙xf6+ ♕xf7 28. ♜c7+ ♔xf6 29. ♜f1!; 26... ♙xc3!? 27. ♕xh8 ♜xb2! 28. ♙xh5 ♜xh8 29. ♜d7+ ♔f8 30. ♜cd1! ♙xh5 31. ♜xb7 ♙d2! leaves some chances of survival) 27. ♜d7+ ♔g8 28. ♜g4! ♜h6! (28... ♙e4? 29. ♙f3+—) 29. ♜xb7 with a big and probably decisive advantage, which would have been a logical and deserved outcome of the brilliant home preparation.

**26. ...                              ♙f6xc3!**

White probably underestimated this composed response.

**27. ♜h3xe6**

It promised even less to play 27. ♜xf7+ ♔g8 28. ♜xb7 ♕xf4 29. ♜g4 ♕xe2+ 30. ♜xe2 ♜d5, although after 31. ♜g2! ♙xb2 32. ♜xd5 exd5 33. ♜c6 the activity of the white pieces compensates for the lack of material.

27. ... ♔a2xe6  
 28. ♟g5xe6+ ♟g7-h6  
 29. ♜c1xc3

After 29.♟g5 Black also defends with an only move: 29...♙c8! 30.♟xf7+ ♟g7 31.♜c7 ♙a5 32.♞e7 ♙b4 33.♞ec7.

29. ... ♙b7-c8!  
 30. ♜c3xc8 ♜h8xc8  
 31. ♜d7xf7 ♜c8-e8?!

Black doesn't withstand the tension despite essentially having resolved all his problems. The simple 31...♜c2! 32.♙d3 ♜xb2 33.♟g5 ♟g7 34.♞f6 ♜c8 35.♜xg6+ ♟h5 36.♜xg7 ♜c1+ 37.♙f1 ♜bb1 guaranteed a draw from a position of strength.

32. ♟e6-g5 ♟h5-g7  
 33. ♟g1-f2 ♜e8-f8?

And this already loses – fatigue and time trouble clearly take their toll. A draw would have followed after 33...♜ad8 34.♜a7 ♜d2 35.♟f7+ ♟h7 36.♟g5+.

34. ♜f7-d7!

Now 35...♜ad8 is impossible and the activity of the white rook becomes the decisive factor. Kasimdzhanov conducts the final attack with minimal forces brilliantly.

34. ... ♜f8-f6  
 35. ♙e2-d3! b5-b4  
 36. h2-h4! a6-a5  
 37. h4-h5! a5-a4  
 38. h5xg6 a4-a3  
 39. ♟g5-f7+ ♟h6-h5  
 40. ♟f7-e5 ♜f6xg6  
 41. ♙d3xg6+ ♟h5-h6  
 42. b2xa3 1-0

In terms of depth of immersion into the mysteries of a position this example recalls the Anand games we recently looked at. That's no coincidence if you recall that Rustam is part of the World Champion's coaching team. Here, however, for the first time we encountered one of the key problems of modern chess. No matter how deep and flawless your home analysis, sooner or later it'll come to an end, and the switch from autopilot to manual control can be difficult even for the strongest grandmasters. Strangely enough, it can be easier to an extent for the player who 'gets caught out by a variation': he's balancing on the edge of the abyss and can save himself only at the cost of extreme effort. He doesn't know at which point his opponent's home analysis will end, so whenever his opponent heads out onto the open seas he's already fully mobilised and ready to solve the most complex of puzzles. In contrast, the player who's 'leading' can't immediately adapt to the new mode, and during the time taken for him to readjust the fruits of months of work are often ruined. For example, in the game we looked at Kasimdzhanov almost let the win slip away, but his tired opponent wasn't able to exploit his chances.

It's always interesting to see encounters between researchers who take differing approaches to opening preparation. Boris Gelfand is one of the few members of the elite to have been formed as a player in pre-computer times. Therefore he still, in the old manner, takes responsibility for the conceptual side himself, allowing the MF to work out the details. Dmitry Yakovenko has much more trust in the machine – of course, when it's used properly.

[E35]

**Dmitry Yakovenko**

**Boris Gelfand**

Jermuk 2009 (4)

Game 48

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4  | ♘g8-f6 |
| 2. c2-c4  | e7-e6  |
| 3. ♘b1-c3 | ♙f8-b4 |
| 4. ♚d1-c2 | d7-d5  |
| 5. c4xd5  | e6xd5  |
| 6. ♙c1-g5 | c7-c5  |
| 7. d4xc5  |        |

Of course no-one any longer repeats Keres' mistake of 7.0-0-0? which we've already seen.

- |           |       |
|-----------|-------|
| 7. ...    | h7-h6 |
| 8. ♙g5-h4 | g7-g5 |

Gelfand has also played this position as White: 8...0-0 9.e3 g5 10.♙g3 ♘e4 11.♘f3 ♘d7 12.♙e2 ♘dxc5 with approximate equality, Gelfand-Karjakin, Sochi 2008.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 9. ♙h4-g3  | ♘f6-e4 |
| 10. ♙g3xb8 |        |



- |         |         |
|---------|---------|
| 10. ... | ♙b4xc3+ |
|---------|---------|

Forced, due to the threat of 11.♚a4+. Or rather, it's forced if Black is planning to take on b8, but there's another much more interesting option: 10...♚f6!? 11.♙g3 (the most principled move. Both 11.♘f3 and 11.a3 are totally

harmless for Black) 11...♘xc3 12.a3 ♙f5 13.♚d2 ♙a5:

A) 14.b4? ♘e4 15.♚c1 ♚c8! 16.♙a2 ♚xc5 17.♚a1 ♚c6 18.♚e5+ ♘d8 19.♚xh8+ ♘d7 0-1, I. Sokolov-Aronian, Turin Olympiad 2006. It was actually Aronian who introduced 10...♚f6 into practice;

B) 14.♘f3!? isn't so catastrophic for White, but it's certainly not a way of fighting for an edge: 14...♘b1 15.♚xa5 ♚xb2 16.♚a4+ ♙d7 17.♙e5 ♘c3:

B1) If you so desire it's also possible to lose here: 18.♚b4? ♚xa1+ 19.♘d2 d4! 20.♚xd4 (20.♙xd4 ♘e4+ 21.♘c2 ♚a2+ 22.♘c1 0-0) 20...♚b2+ 21.♘e3 ♚c1+ 22.♘d2 ♘b5;

B2) 18.♚d1! ♘xd1 19.♙xb2 ♘xb2 20.♙b1 ♘a4 21.♙xb7 ♘xc5;

C) 14.e3! 0-0-0!? (14...0-0 15.b4! ♙d8 16.♘f3 ♘e4 17.♚c1 is better for White) 15.♙d6. Black has a choice in this extremely sharp position:

C1) 15...d4!? 16.♘e2! ♙g6 (16...♙g4!?) 17.♘xd4 ♘e4 18.♚xa5 ♚xf2+ 19.♘d1 ♚d7. After some thought the MF firmly gives zeros in all the main lines – don't ask me why;

C2) 15...♙g4!? 16.f3!? d4 17.e4 ♚he8 18.♘e2? (18.♙d3!) 18...♙xf3! 19.gxf3 ♚xf3 –+ Vavrak-V. Popov, Budva 2009.

Rest assured, both players, theoretical experts and very hard workers, knew perfectly well what we also now know. Why didn't Gelfand play 10...♚f6 and what did Yakovenko have in mind for that move? That question and, above all, the answers to it, make up the main inner content of this game.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 11. b2xc3   | ♙a8xb8 |
| 12. ♚c2-a4+ | ♙c8-d7 |
| 13. ♚a4-d4  | 0-0    |

14. f2-f3      ♖e4-f6  
15. g2-g4



15. ...      b7-b6!

Formally a novelty, but in reality accessible to everyone. True, my MF only gives this move as its second line, but the first – 15...♖h7 – isn't even worth discussing. Weaker is 15...♖e8 16.h4 ♖e7 17.hxg5 hxg5 18.♖h3 ♖e5 19.♖f2 with a small but persistent edge for White, Bocharov-Zhou Weiqi, Moscow 2009.

16. c5-c6!

It's hard to say if this last move by Black came as a surprise to Yakovenko, but his reaction was perfectly predictable. It's extremely dangerous to open additional lines when you're poorly developed.

16. ...      ♙d7xc6  
17. h2-h4      ♖f8-e8

17...♖d7!? 18.hxg5 ♖xg5.

18. h4xg5      h6xg5  
19. e2-e3

A little conservative. The obvious move was 19.♖h6 ♖e6 (19...♙g7? 20.♖h5 ♙g6 21.♖d3+) 20.♖h3 ♖h7 21.♖xe6 fxe6 22.♖e5 but after the forced 22...♙f7 only the far from obvious 23.f4! promises White any winning

chances, as the natural course of events, 23.e3 ♖c8 24.♙d3 ♖f6! 25.♖xf6+ ♙xf6, leads to equality.

19. ...      ♖d8-d6



20. ♖g1-e2

After this move the position becomes totally even. However, Black also didn't have any particular problems after other normal continuations: 20.♙f2? ♖e4!; or 20.♙d2!? ♖e5 21.♙d3 ♖be8 22.♖h3 ♖xe3 23.♖xg5 ♖g3 24.♙c2=; or 20.0-0-0!?

20. ...      ♙c6-b5  
21. ♖e1-f2      ♙b5xe2  
22. ♙f1xe2      ♖b8-c8  
23. ♙e2-d3      ♖d6-e5  
24. ♖a1-c1      ♙g8-g7  
25. ♖c1-c2      ♖e8-e7  
26. a2-a4      ♖c8-e8  
27. ♖c2-e2      ♖e8-c8  
28. ♖e2-c2      ♖c8-e8  
29. ♖c2-e2      ♖e8-c8  
30. ♖e2-c2      1/2-1/2

The above encounter wasn't distinguished by any particular external effects, and as often happens in encounters between top-class grandmasters a huge amount of the work remained outside the game played. But even the unspoken questions (some of which the author formulated) provoke curios-



ity among colleagues and stimulate further investigation.

Vasily Ivanchuk, a representative of the same generation as Gelfand, also relies more on himself. True, his opening repertoire is significantly wider than that of Boris, so it's very difficult for opponents to prepare to play against him.

The game given below has a long pre-history. Ivanchuk analysed the idea of 10...♖f6 a long time ago, but never got the chance to use it in practice, and the variation was left in his home archive. It surfaced again from his memory when he prepared for the Capablanca Memorial in 2006. The upcoming tournament was a double round-robin, so you had to prepare both colours for each player. One of the upcoming opponents, Evgeny Bareev, usually played 4.♖c2 against the Nimzo-Indian Defence, and the half-forgotten novelty was just the thing. Fortunately, in the passing years no new games on this topic had appeared in the database, so all that had to be done was to check and refresh the variations. The work didn't stop even during Vasily's wedding, which took place a few days before his trip to Cuba, as his second – Grandmaster Orest Gritsak – was also the groom's best man. So Ivanchuk can consider the win in this game his wedding present to himself.

[E37]

Game 49

**Evgeny Bareev**  
**Vasily Ivanchuk**

Havana 2006 (4)

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4  | ♘g8-f6 |
| 2. c2-c4  | e7-e6  |
| 3. ♘b1-c3 | ♙f8-b4 |
| 4. ♖d1-c2 | d7-d5  |

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 5. a2-a3   | ♙b4xc3+ |
| 6. ♖c2xc3  | ♘f6-e4  |
| 7. ♖c3-c2  | c7-c5   |
| 8. d4xc5   | ♘b8-c6  |
| 9. c4xd5   | e6xd5   |
| 10. ♘g1-f3 |         |



10. ...

♖d8-f6

It was this move that lay behind Black's idea. Usually Black would choose 10...♙f5 The novelty worked excellently, though subsequently it turned out that Ivanchuk had nevertheless been pre-empted.

11. e2-e3

The most natural reaction. However, just recently White successfully tried the extravagant 11.h4!?. Zhu Chen got nothing in particular after 11...♙f5 12.♙g5 ♖e6 13.♖c1 h6 14.♙e3 ♖f6 (14...0-0) 15.♙g5 ♖e6 16.♙f4 d4 17.e3 0-0 18.♙c4 ♖f6 but she won the game, Zhu Chen-Hou Yifan, World Championship 2010. If we recall that the Qatari player's second at this tournament was Morozevich then it comes as no surprise. Moreover, the MF, having thought a little, also rates this idea quite highly. Also worth considering was the solid 11.g3.

11. ...

♙c8-g4

**12. ♖f1-e2**

12. ♖d4?:

A) 12... ♖xd4?! 13. exd4 ♖d1? (13... 0-0) 14. ♖b5+ ♗e7 15. ♗xd1 ♜xf2+ 16. ♗e2 ♜xh1 17. ♖e3;

B) 12... ♖d1! 13. ♗xd1 ♜xf2+ 14. ♗e1 ♜xh1 15. ♜xc6 bxc6 16. g3 0-0 with better chances for Black in the game Elianov-Cs. Balogh, Bosnian League, Teslic 2006. For some reason this game only made it into the databases much later, so neither Ivanchuk nor Bareev were familiar with it.

<b>12. ...</b>	<b>0-0</b>
<b>13. 0-0</b>	<b>♖f8-e8</b>
<b>14. ♖c1-d2</b>	<b>d5-d4!?</b>

Black continues to up the tension. Comfortable equality was guaranteed by 14... ♖e5.

<b>15. ♖a1-d1</b>	<b>♜e4xd2</b>
<b>16. ♖c2xd2</b>	<b>♖a8-d8!</b>

Black didn't get into all these complications in order to be satisfied with a slightly worse position after 16... dxe3 17. fxe3 ♖e7 18. h3.

<b>17. ♖d2-c1</b>	<b>d4-d3!</b>
<b>18. ♖d1xd3</b>	<b>♖d8xd3</b>
<b>19. ♖e2xd3</b>	<b>♖g4xf3</b>
<b>20. g2xf3</b>	<b>♜c6-e5</b>

Again rejecting simple equality: 20... ♖xf3 21. ♖d1 ♖h3 22. ♗h1 ♖e5 23. ♖e2 ♖xc5.

<b>21. ♖d3-e4</b>	<b>♜e5xf3+</b>
<b>22. ♖e4xf3</b>	<b>♖f6xf3</b>
<b>23. ♖c1-d1</b>	<b>♖f3-f5</b>
<b>24. b2-b4</b>	

After 24. ♖d6 h6 25. b4 ♖e6 26. ♖b8+ ♗h7 27. ♖xb7 ♖d3 Black also has sufficient counterplay.

**24. ... h7-h6!**

Deciding not to force a draw with 24... ♖g6+ 25. ♗h1 ♖e4+ Ivanchuk continues to look for winning chances against his extremely tired opponent, while not running any particular risks himself.

<b>25. ♖f1-e1</b>	<b>a7-a5!?</b>
<b>26. e3-e4</b>	<b>♖f5-g6+</b>
<b>27. ♗g1-f1</b>	<b>a5xb4</b>
<b>28. a3xb4</b>	<b>♖e8xe4</b>
<b>29. ♖d1-b1?! </b>	

Equality was maintained by 29. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 30. ♖d8+ ♗h7 31. ♖d7, but for that you needed to foresee that after 31... f5 32. b5 f4 there's the far from obvious 33. ♖g4!.

<b>29. ...</b>	<b>♖g6-a6+</b>
<b>30. ♗f1-g2</b>	<b>♖e4-g4+</b>
<b>31. ♗g2-h3?! </b>	

31. ♗f3.

<b>31. ...</b>	<b>♖g4-g6</b>
----------------	---------------



<b>32. ♖b1-f5?</b>
--------------------

This loses the game. 32. ♖e3 was more stubborn, although after 32... ♖c6 33. ♖g3 ♖f6 White would be faced with a difficult defence.

<b>32. ...</b>	<b>♖a6-c6!</b>
----------------	----------------

- |             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| 33. ♖e1-e4  | ♔g6-g5! |
| 34. ♜f5-f3  | ♜c6-d7+ |
| 35. ♘h3-h4  | ♚g5-g1  |
| 36. ♜f3-e3  | ♜d7-f5  |
| 37. ♖e4-e8+ | ♙g8-h7  |
| 38. ♜e3-e4  | g7-g5+  |

Without waiting for 39. ♘h5 ♜g6+ 40. ♜xg6+ fxg6#, White resigned.

0-1

The following three games were played in a topical variation of the Petroff, an opening without which not a single super-tournament now passes. Moreover, they all took place in one and the same tournament – Wijk aan Zee 2010. However, the parallel with the Gothenburg story mentioned before is purely superficial. All the participants in the current theoretical duel were perfectly informed about the state of affairs in the variation, while the games played in the tournament were undoubtedly subjected to an immediate and exacting analysis. It appears no exhaustive answers have yet been reached to all the questions, so a continuation of the theoretical dispute probably won't be long in coming.

The first game to be played was:

[C42]

Game 50

**Sergey Karjakin**

**Jan Smeets**

Wijk aan Zee 2010 (6)

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. e2-e4  | e7-e5  |
| 2. ♘g1-f3 | ♘g8-f6 |
| 3. ♘f3xe5 | d7-d6  |
| 4. ♘e5-f3 | ♘f6xe4 |
| 5. d2-d4  | d6-d5  |
| 6. ♙f1-d3 | ♘b8-c6 |

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 7. 0-0     | ♙f8-e7 |
| 8. c2-c4   | ♘c6-b4 |
| 9. ♙d3-e2  | 0-0    |
| 10. ♘b1-c3 | ♙c8-f5 |
| 11. a2-a3  | ♘e4xc3 |
| 12. b2xc3  | ♘b4-c6 |
| 13. ♖f1-e1 | ♖f8-e8 |
| 14. c4xd5  | ♜d8xd5 |
| 15. ♙c1-f4 | ♖a8-c8 |



All the games in question very quickly reached the diagram position.

### 16. g2-g3!?

A novelty! What move hasn't White tried in this most recent of 21st-century tabiyas? 16.h3 (which we'll come back to later), and 16.♙d3 and 16.c4... Even 16.a4 was once played by Ivanchuk. Well, it's not that surprising – the position is complex and interesting – so create, invent, have a go!

Moreover, the MF also doesn't have a clear preference for any of the options listed. The curiosity is instead that the move in the game, which is evaluated quite positively by the machine, hadn't yet been played. It's also amazing that the move that's the first line and appears quite natural, 16.♙f1, has been used extremely rarely.

16. ...

**b7-b5?!**

Black's reaction is quite typical of modern chess. A novelty – particularly in fairly well-known positions – often causes such shock that it's met, almost immediately, with a mistake! The logic is perfectly understandable: the given position has been played and analysed so much, and by top players, that a new move should either be very bad, or fantastically good. As the first can almost be ruled out all that's left is the second, which often gives rise to uncertainty and panic – leading to mistakes.

But let's leave the conjectures and speculation and return to chess. What's the point of the move 16.g3? It's probably aimed at defending the bishop in advance. If 16.c4 isn't dangerous because of 16...♖e4 with ♖c2 to follow, then now 17.c4 with 18.d5 to follow is a serious threat. Black does defend against it – purely mechanically – but the b5-pawn is now a weakness that gives Black serious problems. Much better was the calm and natural 16...♙f6 17.♘d2 (17.c4 ♖d7) 17...♖d7 with an excellent position for Black, when the pawn on g3 looks a little strange.

17. ♘f3-d2      ♘c6-a5?



Mistakes, as is well-known, come in pairs. If Black's previous move only created problems, then this one essentially

resolved them – in White's favour! All that's left is to state that Karjakin's opening bluff brilliantly justified itself! Black should have 'dug in': 17...a6 18.♘f1 ♖d7 with a slightly worse but perfectly playable position.

18. ♘d2-f1?

Alas, White wasn't on the top of his game either. Instead of the standard knight switch it was practically winning to play 18.a4! b4 19.♙a6! (most likely it was this less than obvious move that escaped Sergey's attention) 19...bxc3 20.♖e5 ♖d7 21.♙xc8 ♖xc8 22.♖xa5 cxd2 23.♖xd2.

18. ...      ♘a5-c4  
19. ♙e2xc4?!

Here as well you can note how mistakes are paired. It was possible to pose his opponent problems with 19.a4!? although now it's no longer as strong as on the previous move: 19...♙d6! (the natural 19...a6 would again have left Black on the edge of defeat: 20.axb5 axb5 21.♙xc4 ♖xc4 22.♘e3 ♖e6 23.d5 ♖d7 24.♘xf5 ♖xf5 25.♙xc7! ♖xc7 26.d6 ♖d7 27.♖xe7 ♖dxe7 28.dxe7 ♖e5 29.♖d8) 20.♙xd6 ♙h3! 21.♙f3 ♖xe1 22.♙xd5 ♖xd1 23.♖xd1 ♘xd6 and if Black plays accurately the game should end in a draw.

19. ...      ♖d5xc4  
20. ♘f1-e3      ♖c4-e6  
21. ♘e3xf5

The variation 21.d5 ♖d7 22.♘xf5 ♖xf5 23.♙xc7 ♖xc7 24.d6 ♖d7 25.♖xe7 ♖dxe7 26.dxe7 ♖e5 only underlines the necessity of 19.a4. With the a-file opened this position would be absolutely lost for Black, while now he holds.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 21. ...     | ♙e6xf5 |
| 22. ♖e1-e5  | ♙f5-d7 |
| 23. ♙d1-e2  | ♙e7-d6 |
| 24. ♙e2xb5  | c7-c6  |
| 25. ♖e5xe8+ |        |

After 25...♙xe8 26.♙d3 ♙xf4 27.gxf4 ♙g4+ 28.♙g3 ♙f5 Black isn't worse.

1/2-1/2

A short, but very dramatic, theoretical duel.

The next instalment came towards the end of the tournament

[C42]

Game 51

Alexey Shirov

Vladimir Kramnik

Wijk aan Zee 2010 (11)

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 1. e2-e4   | e7-e5  |
| 2. ♘g1-f3  | ♘g8-f6 |
| 3. ♘f3xe5  | d7-d6  |
| 4. ♘e5-f3  | ♘f6xe4 |
| 5. d2-d4   | d6-d5  |
| 6. ♙f1-d3  | ♘b8-c6 |
| 7. 0-0     | ♙f8-e7 |
| 8. c2-c4   | ♘c6-b4 |
| 9. ♙d3-e2  | 0-0    |
| 10. ♘b1-c3 | ♙c8-f5 |
| 11. a2-a3  | ♘e4xc3 |
| 12. b2xc3  | ♘b4-c6 |
| 13. ♙f1-e1 | ♙f8-e8 |
| 14. c4xd5  | ♙d8xd5 |
| 15. ♙c1-f4 | ♙a8-c8 |

And again the familiar tabiya. Up to a point Shirov follows the beaten path.

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 16. h2-h3 | ♙f5-e4 |
|-----------|--------|

The most popular continuation at the time. Also seen more than once was 16...h6 17.♘d2 ♙d7 18.♘c4 ♙d6 with a certain initiative for White.

17. ♘f3-d2!?

The secret of this system's appeal is that on every move both sides have a few almost equivalent options, leaving broad horizons in which to search. All kinds of nuances and details have great significance, and not everyone is capable of remembering them all. So memory plays no small role when you adopt this variation. For example, other moves tried in this position include 17.♙e3; 17.a4; and 17.♙a4, never mind the less popular options. The move in the game was considered harmless back then.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 17. ...    | ♙e4xg2 |
| 18. ♙e2-g4 | ♙g2-h1 |

The best move. After 18...f5 19.♙e2 ♘a5 (19...b5 20.a4! a6 21.axb5 axb5 22.♙b1 also favours White) 20.♙a4! it's hard for Black to defend.

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 19. f2-f3 | ♙e7-h4 |
|-----------|--------|



20. ♙e1-e4!

A novelty that was lying on the surface – or in any case, the MF gives this move as its first line without any hesitation. So the surprise factor can, essentially, be disregarded. Evaluating the more long-range consequences is a different story. The source game went: 20.♙f1?! f5 21.♙h5 g6 22.♙xh1 gxh5 23.♙g1+

♔h8 24. ♖f1?! Leko-Anand, San Luis 2005. Here White even ultimately won the game. Frankly, 20. ♖f1 looks a little strange. The MF has undoubtedly gained in skill in the intervening years.

**20. ... f7-f5**  
**21. ♖g1xh1 f5xg4**

Risky is 21... fxe4 22. fxe4 ♖xe4 23. ♖f3 ♖ce8 24. ♔xe4 ♖xe4 (24... ♖xe4 25. ♖xc7) 25. ♖xc7! and Black will have trouble in the endgame.

**22. h3xg4**

The first conclusions can be drawn. White's novelty hasn't altered the evaluation of the position as equal, but it's given it an original configuration. White has a certain space advantage, but his king is weak.

**22. ... ♖d5-f7**

Given that White was nevertheless almost forced to exchange queens it was a little more accurate to immediately play 22... ♔e7.

**23. ♖d1-b3 ♔c6-e7!?**  
**24. ♖b3xf7+**

Following the main line. The careless 24. ♖xb7 ♔d5 25. ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 26. ♖e5 ♖g5 (26... ♔xc3 27. ♖c1 ♔d5 28. ♖c5 ♖d8= is also perfectly possible) 27. c4 ♔e7! 28. ♖d1 ♔g6 might actually have led White into difficulties – the king is naked!

**24. ... ♖g8xf7**  
**25. c3-c4 ♔e7-g6**  
**26. ♖f4-h2 ♖h4-f6**  
**27. ♖a1-b1 b7-b6**  
**28. d4-d5**

It's unlikely Shirov had this particular position on his board during prepara-

tion for the game (although nowadays anything's possible), but he might very well have glanced at something similar. Although objectively the position's still equal it's nevertheless more pleasant for White to play. Given the absence of risk that's not such a small achievement!

**28. ... ♖f6-e5**  
**29. f3-f4 ♖e5-d6**  
**30. a3-a4 h7-h6**  
**31. ♖b1-e1 ♔g6-f8**  
**32. f4-f5 ♔f8-d7**  
**33. ♖h2xd6 c7xd6**  
**34. ♖e4-e6 ♔d7-e5**

It was perfectly solid to play 34... ♔c5 35. ♔e4 ♔xe4 36. ♖1xe4 ♖xe6 37. fxe6+ ♔e8 but the move in the game doesn't look any worse.



**35. c4-c5!**

It's hard to imagine you can find a spectacular resource like this in such a calm position with very limited material. It probably came as a surprise to Kramnik.

**35. ... ♔e5-d3?!**

If we assume Black was shocked by the last move he faced a very tough choice. The variation 35... ♖xe6 36. fxe6+ ♔e7 37. ♔e4! bxc5 (37... dxc5? 38. ♔g3 loses) 38. ♖b1 ♖c7 39. ♖b8 might seem dangerous to a human from a distance,

but the MF is unmoved: 39...♖xg4 40.♖g8 g5 41.♖g7+ ♕d8 42.♖g8+ with a draw.

### 36. c5xd6?!

An inaccuracy in response. Black faced much more tricky tasks after 36.♗e4! ♗xe1 37.♗xd6+ ♖f8 38.♗xe8 (it seems Black also holds after 38.c6 ♖xe6 39.fxe6 ♖a8 40.c7 ♗d3 41.c8♖+ ♖xc8 42.♗xc8 ♖e8 43.♗d6+ ♖d8 44.♗f5 ♗f4 45.e7+ ♖d7 46.d6 ♗e6) 38...bxc5! (losing is 38...♖xe8? 39.c6! ♗d3 40.c7 ♖c8 41.d6 ♗c5 42.♖e7) 39.♗xg7 ♖xg7 40.♖xe1, although after 40...c4 Black's drawing chances are perfectly realistic.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 36. ...     | ♗d3xe1 |
| 37. d6-d7   | ♖c8-d8 |
| 38. d7xe8♖+ | ♖d8xe8 |
| 39. ♗d2-c4  | ♖e8xe6 |
| 40. f5xe6+  | ♖f7-e7 |
| 41. ♗c4-e5  | ♖e7-d6 |

Kramnik holds the ending with accurate play.

- |              |         |
|--------------|---------|
| 42. ♗e5-c4+  | ♖d6-e7  |
| 43. ♗c4-e5   | ♖e7-d6  |
| 44. ♖h1-h2!? | ♗e1-c2  |
| 45. ♗e5-c4+  | ♖d6-e7  |
| 46. ♖h2-g3   | ♗c2-b4  |
| 47. ♗c4-e3   | ♗b4xd5! |
| 48. ♗e3xd5+  | ♖e7xe6  |
| 49. ♗d5-c3   | a7-a6   |
| 50. ♖g3-f4   | b6-b5   |
| 51. a4xb5    | 1/2-1/2 |

The final instalment took place in the last round, where old arch-rivals met face to face. Shirov's novelty hadn't shaken Kramnik at all, although some adjustments had probably been made. A familiar position soon arose on the board.

[C42]

Vishwanathan Anand  
Vladimir Kramnik

Game 52

Wijk aan Zee 2010 (12)

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 1. e2-e4   | e7-e5  |
| 2. ♗g1-f3  | ♗g8-f6 |
| 3. ♗f3xe5  | d7-d6  |
| 4. ♗e5-f3  | ♗f6xe4 |
| 5. d2-d4   | d6-d5  |
| 6. ♖f1-d3  | ♗b8-c6 |
| 7. 0-0     | ♖f8-e7 |
| 8. c2-c4   | ♗c6-b4 |
| 9. ♖d3-e2  | 0-0    |
| 10. ♗b1-c3 | ♖c8-f5 |
| 11. a2-a3  | ♗e4xc3 |
| 12. b2xc3  | ♗b4-c6 |
| 13. ♖f1-e1 | ♖f8-e8 |
| 14. c4xd5  | ♖d8xd5 |
| 15. ♖c1-f4 | ♖a8-c8 |
| 16. h2-h3  | ♖f5-e4 |



I hope the reader hasn't yet forgotten this position. In the previous game we mentioned White's numerous options. It turns out there was yet another, and a very unpleasant one!

### 17. ♖d1-c1!

The idea behind this move isn't new and is perfectly understandable: as 17.c4 will be met by 17...♖f5, White defends his bishop in good time, preparing the c3-c4 advance in full com-

fort. But it turns out there's also another, less obvious idea.

**17. ... ♘c6-a5**

A natural reaction, but Black soon encounters serious difficulties. It's possible the move in the game is already an inaccuracy. It was worth considering the composed 17...h6 18.c4 (in case of 18.♖e3 there's the strong 18...♙d6!) 18...♗f5 19.♘e5 (19.d5 ♘a5 is good for Black) 19...♘xe5 20.♙xe5 ♗g6 21.♙g4 ♙f5 and Black has no problems. Vladimir Kramnik said after the game that he'd forgotten his analysis – perhaps he had this possibility in mind. But it's extremely difficult for your memory to retain a lot of similar positions differing only by nuances. If the world's best players complain about the problem it means it really does exist!

**18. ♖c1-e3!**

Black had prepared both for 18.♘d2, after which there's the equalising 18...♙d6! 19.♙xd6 cxd6 20.♘xe4 ♗xe4 21.♙f3 ♗xe1+ 22.♖xe1 ♖b3, and 18.c4 ♗f5 19.♖e3 where there would follow 19...♙xf3 20.♖xf3 ♙d6!=. However, it's possible he underestimated the other, more veiled idea behind White's 17th move.

**18. ... ♙e7-f8?!**

A natural move, but one leading to a difficult position. The problems also weren't solved by 18...♙d6 19.♘e5 c5 20.♙h5 ♙g6 21.♙f3 ♖b3 22.♙g4 but it was worth considering 18...♙f5.

**19. c3-c4 ♖d5-d8**

It's not possible to escape by giving up the exchange: 19...♙xf3 20.cxd5 ♗xe3 21.fxe3 ♙xd5 22.♙g4.

**20. ♘f3-e5 ♙e4-f5**  
**21. ♖e3-c3**



**21. ... b7-b6**

Aesthetically unappealing are both 21...c6 and also 21...♘c6 22.♘xc6 bxc6 23.c5. It's also hard to decide on 21...f6 22.♖xa5 (22.♙h5) 22...♖xd4 23.♙f3 c6 24.♘xc6 ♖xf4 25.♘xa7.

**22. ♜a1-d1**

There was also a radical solution to the position: 22.c5!?, but Anand prefers a more natural course of events.

**22. ... ♖d8-f6**

22...f6 was the lesser evil.

**23. ♖c3-g3**

Following the same strict line. The variation 23.c5 ♙xh3 24.♖g3 ♙f5 25.♙g5 ♖e6 26.♙h5 ♙g6 27.♙g4 f5 28.d5 is of course striking, but too cooperative. Moreover, it reeks of machine oil.

**23. ... ♘a5-c6**  
**24. ♘e5-g4 ♖f6-g6**  
**25. d4-d5 ♘c6-a5**

Another variation on this theme was the line 25...♙c2 26.♜d2 ♘a5 27.♜xc2! ♖xc2 28.♘h6+ ♙h8 29.♘xf7+ ♙g8 30.♘e5 ♖e4 31.♙f1!.



**26. ♖f4xc7 ♘f5-c2?!**

26...♘c5 was a little more stubborn.

**27. ♜d1-c1 ♘a5-b3?!**

It's already too late to admit the mistake: 27...♘f5 28.c5!.

**28. ♜c1xc2! ♖g6xc2**

**29. ♘g4-h6+ ♖g8-h8**

**30. ♘h6xf7+ ♖h8-g8**

**31. ♘f7-h6+ ♖g8-h8**

**32. ♘h6-f7+ ♖h8-g8**

**33. ♘f7-h6+ ♖g8-h8**



**34. ♘c7-e5!**

Avoiding the dubious temptation of repeating the position once more.

**34. ... ♖c2-g6**

**35. ♘e2-g4 ♜c8xc4**

**36. ♖g3xb3 ♜e8xe5**

**37. ♜e1xe5 ♜c4-c1+**

**38. ♖g1-h2 ♘f8-d6**

**39. f2-f4**

39.♖e3! was even better.

**39. ... ♘d6xe5**

**40. f4xe5 ♖g7xh6**

Amazingly enough, after the best move, 40...♖e4!, White would still have some work to do: 41.d6! (41.♘f5 ♖xe5+ 42.♖g3 ♖xd5 43.♖b8+ ♖g8 44.♖xa7 also isn't bad) 41...♖f4+ 42.♖g3 ♜h1+

43.♖xh1 ♖xg3 44.♘f7+ ♖g8 45.d7 ♖xf7 46.d8 ♖ ♖e1+ 47.♖h2 ♖xe5+ 48.g3 ♖b2+ 49.♖g1.

**41. ♖b3-e3! ♖g6-b1**

**42. d5-d6 ♜c1-h1+**

**43. ♖h2-g3 ♜h1-e1**

**44. ♖e3-f4 ♜e1-f1**

**45. ♘g4-f3 1-0**

So the overall outcome of the theoretical confrontation was clearly in White's favour, although arithmetically speaking it doesn't look so convincing. However, there's no doubt we'll very soon receive answers to the questions raised or left unspoken. The duel continues!

The two mind-boggling games given below were played in an opening which always had an entirely peaceful reputation. It's a paradox of modern tournament practice: the sharpest forced variations, which only recently held sway at the forefront of theory, have been overshadowed after being completely exhausted. In contrast, it's in serene and, it would seem, dull openings like the Petroff and the Queen's Indian Defence, that completely unexpected resources are being discovered.

[E15]

**Livi-Dieter Nisipeanu  
Yannick Pelletier**

Game 53

Rijeka Ech 2010 (5)

**1. d2-d4 ♘g8-f6**

**2. c2-c4 e7-e6**

**3. ♘g1-f3 b7-b6**

**4. g2-g3 ♘c8-a6**

**5. ♖d1-c2**

This modest move has gradually squeezed out of modern practice both a variation that's almost been analysed to

bare kings: 5.b3 ♖b4+ 6.♗d2 ♗e7, and 5.♘bd2 and the unpretentious 5.♚a4 and 5.♚b3.

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 5. ...    | ♗a6-b7 |
| 6. ♗f1-g2 | c7-c5  |
| 7. d4-d5  |        |



It's precisely this unexpected pawn sacrifice that has breathed new life into a variation that had been abandoned as absolutely unpromising. Since 2006 the theory of this branch has developed rapidly, and the variation has entered the repertoire of many of the world's top players.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 7. ...     | e6xd5  |
| 8. c4xd5   | ♘f6xd5 |
| 9. 0-0     | ♗f8-e7 |
| 10. ♗f1-d1 | ♘b8-c6 |
| 11. ♚c2-f5 | ♘d5-f6 |
| 12. e2-e4  |        |



## 12. ... d7-d6!?

A move first played by Judit Polgar. Until this it was considered obligatory to play 12...g6 13.♚f4 0-0 14.e5 ♘h5 and now White has a choice:

A) 15.♚c4 d5! 16.exd6 ♗xd6 17.♘c3 ♘a5 18.♚d3 ♗c7 19.♚c2 ♚e7 20.♗e1 ♚d7 21. ♗g5 Gelfand-Leko, Jermuk 2009;

B) Also tried was 15.♚g4 d5 16.exd6 ♗xd6 (16...♗f6?! 17.♘c3 ♘d4 18.♘xd4 ♗xg2 19.♘f5 ♗c6 20.d7 led to an edge for White, Carlsen-Ivanchuk, Monaco rapid 2007) 17.♘c3 with a verdict that's typical of the ensuing positions here: White has compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

## 13. e4-e5 ♚d8-d7!



This is Black's idea: returning the pawn, but at the cost of an exchange of queens. Good development should, in principle, compensate for the far-advanced d6-pawn. However, limited practice hasn't yet confirmed that verdict.

## 14. ♚f5-c2!?

Nisipeanu nevertheless avoids an exchange of queens and chooses a move the MF doesn't approve of. There's no doubt this choice was preceded by an enormous

amount of research. 14. ♖xd7+ ♜xd7 15. exd6 ♙f6 16. ♖e1+ ♜f8 17. ♜c3 ♜b4 18. ♙g5!? occurred in the source game: 18... ♙xf3?! 19. ♙xf3 ♜d8 20. ♙xf6 ♜xf6 21. ♖e7± Bareev-J. Polgar, Candidates' Match 2007. However, Black has an obvious improvement: 18... ♜c2! 19. ♙xf6 ♜xf6 20. ♖e7 ♙xf3 21. ♙xf3 ♜e8! 22. ♖xe8+ ♜xe8 23. ♙c6+ ♜d8 24. ♜d1 ♜d4, and Black has nothing to fear. That's how Pelletier played against Carlsen, Biel 2008. However, the unexpected 19. ♖e7! followed, and Black again encountered difficulties: 19... ♙xf3?! (the capture on e7 is critical) 20. ♙xf3 ♙xg5 21. ♜xd7 ♜d8 22. ♜xd8+ ♙xd8 23. ♜d1. Pelletier had most likely found improvements on his play, but Nisipeanu preempted him. If you consider the need to also pay serious attention to 14. ♜h4!? and 14. ♖f4!? you can only imagine what a mountain of variations the Romanian grandmaster had to plough through during his preparation. But the effort wasn't in vain!

14. ... ♜c6-b4  
15. ♖c2-e2

Insufficient are 15. ♖b3 ♙d5 and 15. ♖c3 ♜e4.

15. ... ♙b7-a6  
16. ♖e2-e1

After 16. ♖e3 White, besides the same 16... ♜c2, also has to consider 16... ♜g4 or 16... ♜f5.

16. ... ♜b4-c2  
17. ♖e1-d2 ♜c2xa1  
18. e5xf6 ♙e7xf6  
19. ♜d1-e1+ ♙f6-e7

You can understand Black's desire to retain the possibility of castling, but king moves also by no means lose: 19... ♜d8 20. ♜c3 ♜e8 21. ♜d1 ♙b7 22. ♖d3 h6;

19... ♜f8 20. ♜e5 ♙xe5 21. ♙xa8 ♖c8 22. ♙g2 h5 and in both cases play is totally unclear. It's not so easy to win the knight that's got stuck on a1, while during that time Black will be able to organise counterplay.

## 20. ♜b1-c3



The game's critical position. In Black's favour is a gigantic material edge, while no direct threats are visible for White. However, things aren't so simple. White also has his trumps: wonderfully mobilised pieces and the a1-knight is doomed. The position on the board is most likely one of so-called dynamic equality, but how unequal the players' practical chances are! Pelletier has already long since had to make difficult choices at the board, while even if Nisipeanu hadn't analysed all the nuances in great detail he'd have had a glance at how the play might develop. For him the game had, essentially, only just begun, while Black has long since been working hard. His mistake therefore comes as no surprise.

20. ... 0-0?

Castling had in fact been predetermined by Black's previous move, but the king should have been evacuated in the other direction! After 20... 0-0-0! 21. ♖d5!?

(weaker is 21.b3 ♖f6 22.♙b2 ♜xb3 23.axb3 ♙b7; Black also has a comfortable position after 21.♞d5 ♖he8 22.b4 ♙f6 23.♞xf6 gxf6 24.♙b2 ♖xe1+ 25.♞xe1 ♖e8 26.♙xa1 ♖e2) 21...♙b7 22.♞d3 f6!? (22...♖he8 23.♙d2 ♙f6 24.♖xa1 is also interesting) 23.♞d5 (23.♙d2 d5) 23...♖he8 24.♙e3 ♞c2! 25.♞xe7+ ♖xe7 26.♞xc2 ♙e4 the game could have ended in any way whatsoever.

### 21. ♞f3-e5 ♖d7-c8?

Much more stubborn was 21...♞f5! 22.♙xa8 dxe5 23.♙e4 ♖e6 24.♞d5 ♖d8 25.♞xe7+ ♖xe7 26.♞c3 ♖d4 27.b3. Although in the final position White's chances are undoubtedly better Black would definitely have been able to put up resistance.

### 22. ♞e5-c6 ♙e7-d8 23. ♞c3-d5

But now Black's position goes rapidly downhill.

### 23. ... ♖c8-g4

An aesthetically unappealing move, but the more natural 23...♞d7 lost dramatically and by force: 24.♞ce7+ ♙h8 25.b3! ♖e8 26.♙b2! ♙xe7 27.♙xg7+ ♙xg7 28.♞c3+ f6 29.♖xe7+ ♖xe7 30.♞xe7 ♖ad8 31.♞d5.

### 24. b2-b3

Also not bad is 24.b4.

### 24. ... ♙a6-b7 25. h2-h3! ♖g4-h5 26. ♞c6-e7+ ♙g8-h8 27. ♞d5-f4 1-0

In that game the gambler's risk and researcher's inquisitiveness fully justified themselves. The pioneer was less successful in the next encounter.

## [E15] Game 54

**Alexander Riazantsev**  
**Sergey Karjakin**

Poikovsky 2010 (8)

- |    |        |        |
|----|--------|--------|
| 1. | d2-d4  | ♞g8-f6 |
| 2. | c2-c4  | e7-e6  |
| 3. | ♞g1-f3 | b7-b6  |
| 4. | g2-g3  | ♙c8-a6 |
| 5. | ♞d1-c2 |        |

The same fashionable line.

- |    |        |        |
|----|--------|--------|
| 5. | ...    | ♙a6-b7 |
| 6. | ♙f1-g2 | c7-c5  |
| 7. | d4-d5  | e6xd5  |
| 8. | c4xd5  | ♞f6xd5 |
| 9. | 0-0    | ♙f8-e7 |



### 10. ♖c2-e4

A relatively fresh idea. Much more common has been 10.♖d1 ♞c6, as in the Nisipeanu-Pelletier game looked at above, and also in Leko-Karjakin, Wijk aan Zee 2010.

### 10. ... ♞b8-a6

It's no good at all to play 10...♞c7? 11.♞h4 ♙c6 12.♞f5 g6 13.♞c3! gxf5 14.♞xd5 ♖d6 15.♞xf5 with a decisive advantage for White, Sakaev-Ekström, Budva 2009.

10...♙c6 11.♞e5 ♞f6 12.♞xc6 ♞xc6 13.♞d3 gives White the two bishops and, as a result, long-term compensation

for the sacrificed pawn (the other queen retreat led to equality: 13. ♖a4 0-0 14. ♜d1 ♘d4 15. ♙c3 b5 16. ♖a6 b4 Aronian-Anand, Morelia/Linares 2008).

**11. ♘f3-h4 g7-g6**



A natural reaction to the knight attack, although the threat of 12. ♘f5 was far from fatal. For example: 11...0-0 12. ♘f5 ♜b8! 13. ♖a4 ♘ac7 (also interesting is 13...b5!? 14. ♖xb5 ♘ab4 with unclear complications) 14.e4 ♘b4 and now the best move for White is probably 15. ♙f4 as if 15. ♘c3 then 15...♘d3 isn't bad. After 15. ♜d1 there's the strong 15...b5!.

No doubt the position after 11...0-0 will soon become a testing ground for new theoretical experiments.

**12. ♘h4-f5!**

Nevertheless! The stunning knight sacrifice was of course prepared by Riazantsev at home, especially as it was quite straightforward to predict such a course of events. 12. ♖e5!? f6 13. ♖e4 ♖c8 14. ♜d1 ♘ac7 15. ♘xg6?! (15. ♘a3!?) 15...hxg6 16. ♖xg6+ ♔d8 was played in Karjakin-Svidler, Sochi 2008. Black managed to successfully parry the attack.

**12. ... g6xf5**

**13. ♖e4-e5 0-0!**

Much worse for Black is 13...f6 14. ♖xf5.

**14. ♖e5xf5**

Now 15. ♙e4 is threatened, so Black is forced to give back the knight. That means White was risking absolutely nothing when he went for the piece sacrifice, especially as the all-seeing MF very quickly indicates such a possibility. Karjakin also, by his own admission, knew about the possibility, but Riazantsev had gone much deeper into the mysteries of the position.

**14. ... ♜f8-e8  
15. ♘b1-c3!**

The obvious 15. ♙xd5 ♙xd5 16. ♖xd5 would lead to equality after 16...♘b4 17. ♖f5 d5.

**15. ... ♘a6-c7**



**16. ♙g2-e4!**

It's actually from this move on that man and machine begin to cooperate as equals. Initially the MF clearly underestimates this possibility, preferring 16. ♘xd5 ♙xd5 17. ♙xd5 ♘xd5 18. ♖xd5 ♙f6 although here Black has absolutely nothing to fear. Karjakin ended his analysis at this point, but his opponent went significantly further.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 16. ...     | ♙e7-f6 |
| 17. ♖f5xh7+ | ♔g8-f8 |
| 18. ♙e4xd5  | ♙b7xd5 |
| 19. ♘c3xd5  | ♘c7xd5 |
| 20. e2-e4   | ♘d5-c7 |
| 21. ♙c1-h6+ | ♔f8-e7 |
| 22. e4-e5!  | ♙f6xe5 |
| 23. ♖h7-e4! |        |

It wasn't too late to be content with a beautiful draw: 23. ♙g5+ ♙f6 24. ♔fe1+ ♘e6 25. ♔xe6+! dxe6 26. ♙xf6+ ♔xf6 27. ♖h6+ ♔e7 28. ♖h4+ ♔f8 29. ♖h8+, but White had already taken his decision on the 16th move.

### 23. ... f7-f6!

An only move. Losing was 23... ♔f6 24. ♙g5+! ♔xg5 25. f4+ ♔h6 26. fxe5 d5 (even worse is 26... ♖e7 27. ♔f5! ♖e6 28. ♔af1) 27. ♖g4 ♔g8 28. ♔f6+ ♔g6 29. ♔af1 with a triumphant white attack.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 24. f2-f4   | d7-d5  |
| 25. ♖e4-h7+ | ♔e7-d6 |
| 26. f4xe5+  | f6xe5  |
| 27. ♔f1-f7  | ♘c7-e6 |

Of course Black's task is much more difficult at this stage: he needs to find only moves at the board and is literally on the edge of the abyss. At the same time, it's absolutely obvious that White still hasn't started playing independently – Riazantsev was making his moves quickly and confidently. You couldn't envy Sergey his mental state: after all, it might well turn out that Black's position is objectively lost and White knows about it. It's incredibly hard to maintain your composure in such a situation.

### 28. ♖h7-g6!

It's essential to take Black's serious defensive idea of 28... ♔e7 into consideration.

### 28. ... ♔d6-c6!?

With the idea of involving the queen in play. Here 28... ♔e7 is no longer so strong due to 29. ♙g5! (much weaker is 29. ♙f8? ♖xf8 30. ♔xf8 ♔xf8) 29... ♔xf7 30. ♙xd8 ♔g7 31. ♙c7+ ♔xc7 32. ♔f1 and White has better chances. There's an interesting try to seize the initiative with 28... ♔g8 29. ♖f5 ♘d4 30. ♔f6+ ♔c7 31. ♖xe5+ ♔b7 32. ♔af1 ♔e8 33. ♖h5 but White also maintains an edge here.

### 29. ♔a1-f1 d5-d4

The regrouping 29... ♖d6 30. ♔l f6 ♔g8 31. ♖f5 ♔ae8 32. ♔xa7 doesn't bring any relief, as after 32... c4 White has 33. b4! with a winning attack.

### 30. ♔f1-f6 ♖d8-d5



Black has activated his queen and the first impression is that he's resolved all his problems. However, the attacking resources are far from exhausted.

### 31. ♔f7xa7! ♔a8-d8

It's hard to say how far Riazantsev's analysis stretched, but it can't be ruled out that it also included the brilliant

31. ♖xa7!. In any case, up to this point White's play has been flawless – both from a computer and a human point of view. From this point on, however, White's moves lose their machine-wrought quality and accuracy – excellent ideas cease to be backed up by accurate calculation.

### 32. a2-a4!

A strong and absolutely human move, preventing the black king from escaping via the b7-square. However, there were also other options, including 32. ♖f8! with the idea of 34. ♖e7 32... ♖xf8 (32... d3 33. ♖e7 ♖d4+ 34. ♖f1 ♖b5 35. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 36. ♖xe6 ♖f8+ 37. ♖g2 ♖xb2+ 38. ♖h3 ♖h8+ 39. ♖h7) 33. ♖xe6+ ♖d6 34. ♖ae7 ♖xe6 35. ♖xe6+ ♖d7 36. ♖xb6 and Black is helpless; or 32. ♖f7!? d3 33. ♖b7+ ♖b5 34. ♖a6+ ♖c6 35. ♖xe6+! ♖xe6 36. ♖b7+ ♖b5 37. ♖d2! with an irresistible attack.

### 32. ... c5-c4

More serious problems were posed by 32... d3 33. ♖f7! (it seems that was how White was intending to play) 33... ♖d4+ 34. ♖g2 ♖d6 35. ♖h3! (prophylaxis!) 35... d2 36. ♖d7+ ♖xd7 37. ♖xe8 ♖d5 38. ♖xd2 ♖c7 39. ♖xe6 ♖xd2 40. ♖e7 with excellent winning chances.

### 33. ♖g6-f7

In this form the move is no longer so strong. There was an easy win after 33. ♖f8!:

A) 33... d3 34. ♖f7! and it's time for Black to resign. Also sufficient is the thematic 34. ♖e7;

B) 33... ♖xf8 34. ♖xe6+ ♖d6 35. ♖h7 ♖xe6 36. ♖b7+ ♖c5 37. ♖a5+.

### 33. ... ♖c6-c5!

### 34. ♖h6-d2?!

34. ♖c7+! ♖b4 35. ♖e7! ♖xe7  
36. ♖xe7+ ♖c5 37. ♖xe6 ♖xe7  
38. ♖xe7 maintained serious winning chances for White.

### 34. ... c4-c3!



### 35. ♖a7-c7+?

Over the course of the last few moves White, who had a tempting choice, has kept 'guessing wrong'. However, it's only here that he exceeds the bounds of acceptable risk. 35. bxc3! ♖c4! (35... dxc3 36. ♖xc3 ♖c4 37. ♖e1 clearly favours White) 36. cxd4 would still have kept an edge.

### 35. ... ♖c5-b4

### 36. b2xc3+ ♖b4-b3?!

Up until this point Black, by process of elimination, had been finding only moves. However, when at last a choice appeared he also went wrong. 36... dxc3! 37. ♖xc3+ ♖b3! gave better chances.

### 37. c3-c4!

The tempting 37. ♖g6 d3 38. ♖cf7 would come up against the unexpected 38... ♖f4! 39. gxf4 ♖g8.

### 37. ... ♖d5-d6



### 38. ♖c7-b7?

In the heat of battle it's practically impossible to sense when the wind changes. The entirely logical move in the game turned out to be too slow. It was necessary to be decisive: 38. ♖xe6!? ♖xe6! (38... ♗xe6? 39. ♗f3+ ♔c2 40. ♗e2 is too dangerous for Black) 39. ♗f1 ♔c2 40. ♗c1+ ♔d3 41. ♖f7 ♖f6 42. ♖xf6 ♗xf6 43. ♗g5 ♗d6 led to a draw.

There were unpredictable consequences after 38. ♗g6!? d3 39. ♖cf7 ♗d4+ 40. ♖f2 ♗xc4.

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 38. ...    | d4-d3!  |
| 39. a4-a5  | ♗d6-d4+ |
| 40. ♔g1-f1 | ♗d4-e4  |

40... ♔c2 41. ♖xb6 ♔xd2 also wasn't bad.

### 41. ♔f1-g1

41. ♖xb6+ ♔c2 42. ♔g1 (42. ♖bxe6 ♗h1+ 43. ♔f2 ♗xh2+ 44. ♔f1 ♗h1+ 45. ♔f2 ♖f8) 42... ♔xd2 43. ♖bxe6 ♖xe6 44. ♗xe6 ♔c2 45. c5 ♗d5! led to the position in the game.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 41. ...    | ♔b3-c2 |
| 42. ♖b7xb6 |        |

Also hopeless for White is 42. ♖e7 ♖xe7 ♔xd2 44. ♖xe6 ♗d4+ 45. ♔f1 ♔c2.

- |             |          |
|-------------|----------|
| 42. ...     | ♔c2xd2   |
| 43. ♖b6xe6  | ♖e8xe6   |
| 44. ♗f7xe6  | ♔d2-c2   |
| 45. c4-c5   | ♗e4-d5!  |
| 46. ♗e6-g4  | ♗d5-d4+! |
| 47. ♖f6-f2+ | d3-d2    |
| 48. ♗g4-f3  | e5-e4    |
| 49. ♗f3-f7  | ♔c2-c3   |
| 0-1         |          |

An amazing game! Of course Riazantsev can curse his bad luck – he in no way deserved to lose the game. But you can't help but admire the self-possession and ingenuity of his opponent.

Here we've once more encountered a curious phenomenon of modern chess. A player landing a surprise at the start of the game has an undoubted advantage while he remains within his home analysis. His opponent risks tripping up at any moment and finds himself under colossal psychological pressure. However, if he nevertheless manages not to lose immediately and survives crossing that particular minefield, the balance of power alters dramatically. The hunter, prepared only to shoot his prey with impunity, often relaxes and himself falls victim to his desperately resisting and extremely focussed opponent.

The above games clearly demonstrate the depths to which home analysis of popular opening variations can stretch. It's a different matter entirely to construct your preparation 'for an opponent' during the course of an event. That has a specific, pinpoint character and is connected not only to the peculiarities of the opponent, his opening and playing tastes, but often also to the tournament situation and the immediate sporting goals. As a rule, such preparation takes place directly before a



game, so time and effort must be spent rationally. It's tempting, of course, to find a weak point in the repertoire of your opponent and land a crushing blow, but when time is limited something like that is usually unrealistic. Therefore posing even small problems in the opening is already an achievement. The realistic task comes down to getting the most comfortable position for yourself while also one that's unpleasant for your opponent. Sometimes, however, even in the few hours that a chess player usually has available to him before a game, he manages to find an original idea. In such cases it's enough to convince yourself that the risk isn't too great. Even if the objective value of the novelty isn't so high the surprise factor is more important than the quality. Such an approach is particularly effective at accelerated time controls.

The following game was played in rapid chess, which was undoubtedly something Ivanchuk took into account. Here it must be added that with his encyclopaedic erudition and extremely wide opening repertoire, Vasily is particularly strong when it comes to preparing for a specific opponent.

**[B87]**  
**Vasily Ivanchuk**  
**Sergey Karjakin**

Nice rapid 2008 (4)

Game 55

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. e2-e4  | c7-c5  |
| 2. ♘g1-f3 | d7-d6  |
| 3. d2-d4  | c5xd4  |
| 4. ♘f3xd4 | ♘g8-f6 |
| 5. ♘b1-c3 | a7-a6  |
| 6. ♙f1-c4 | e7-e6  |
| 7. ♙c4-b3 | b7-b5  |
| 8. ♙c1-g5 | ♙f8-e7 |

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 9. ♖d1-f3  | ♖d8-c7 |
| 10. e4-e5  | ♙c8-b7 |
| 11. e5xd6  | ♙e7xd6 |
| 12. ♖f3-e3 | ♙d6-c5 |
| 13. 0-0-0  | ♘b8-c6 |



Although the position that's arisen was not considered critical for the Sozin Attack, it was nevertheless encountered periodically, and was thought more than satisfactory for Black. That verdict was also backed up by a game played by Karjakin a few years earlier.

**14. ♖e3xe6+!!**

Vasily had learned of this move not long before the tournament in Monaco. Analysis, in which the MF played no small role, confirmed that the sacrifice was perfectly correct. The time control should only increase its effect. In the game mentioned White's play was more restrained: 14. ♙xf6 gxf6:

A) 15. ♘d5?! ♖d8 16. c3 ♘xd4 17. cxd4 ♙a7 18. ♘f4 ♖d6 19. ♘h5? (it was essential to switch to a miserable defence: 19. ♚d3 0-0-0 20. ♚hd1) 19...0-0-0 20. ♘xf6 ♙xd4 0-1, Papa-Karjakin, Lausanne 2003. Although the novelty Vasily played doesn't alter the evaluation of the position it totally alters its character and forces Black to act extremely accurately. Moreover, Sergey was forced to act with extremely lim-

ited time, which made his task even more difficult;

B) 15. ♖e4 was better, and no doubt Karjakin would have taken this improvement into account. 15... ♙xd4 16. ♖xd4 ♙xd4 17. ♖xf6+ ♖f8 18. ♗xd4 ♖d8 19. ♗h4 h5 (19...h6!?) 20. ♗g5 h4 with roughly equal chances.

As for aesthetics, until very recently this find would have provoked a storm of delight among connoisseurs of chess beauty. Now the faithful MF finds 14. ♗xe6+ in seconds, and soon gives it as the first line. For me personally, that's unpleasant news

14. ... f7xe6  
15. ♖d4xe6



Black was faced with an extremely tough choice, so it's no surprise Sergey didn't guess correctly.

15. ... ♗c7-e5?!

The best defence (undoubtedly due to the MF's efforts) was demonstrated very quickly: 15... ♗e7! 16. ♖he1 ♗xe6! 17. ♖e6+ ♖e7 18. ♙xf6 gxf6 19. ♙d5! (in Andrews-Gopal, Philadelphia 2008, there followed 19. ♖de1? ♖d7 with better chances for Black) 19... ♙xd5 20. ♖xd5 and the most likely outcome would have been a draw. It seems as though the move in the game is only a transposition of moves, but that's not the

case. Black could apparently also have achieved a draw with the help of the utterly composed 15... ♙b6! 16. ♖he1 (White also isn't losing after 16. ♖xc7+ ♙xc7 17. ♖he1+ ♖e7 18. ♙d5 ♖b8 19. ♙xb7 ♖xb7 20. ♙xf6 gxf6 21. ♖e6 ♖f7 22. ♖xa6) 16... ♗xh2!! and White has nothing better than perpetual check: 17. ♖c7+ (17. ♖xg7+ ♖f8 18. ♖e6+ ♖f7 19. ♖f4+ ♖f8) 17... ♖f8 18. ♖e6+ ♖f7 19. ♖f4+ ♖f8 20. ♖e6+. So it seems Ivanchuk's brilliant find was perfectly correct, and even if Black played correctly he was taking no risks. It's just a pity that the potential of this discovery was exhausted after only a few games.

16. ♖e6xg7+!

White wouldn't have had this resource after 15... ♗e7!.

16. ... ♖e8-f8

Losing was 16... ♖e7? 17. ♖he1 ♖hf8 18. ♖h5.

17. ♖g7-e6+ ♖f8-f7

And this choice as well turned out to be less than optimal. Better was 17... ♖e7! 18. ♖he1 ♙xf2! 19. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 20. ♖g7! ♖c4! 21. ♙xc4 bxc4 22. ♖f1 ♖f7! 23. ♖xf2 ♖g6 with an approximately equal position.

18. ♖h1-e1 ♗e5xe1?

The decisive mistake. Resistance could have been continued in two manners: 18... ♗xg5+!? 19. ♖xg5+ ♖g6 20. ♖ce4! ♙e7! (20... ♖xe4 21. ♖xe4 ♙e7 22. ♖d6±) although after 21. ♖f7 (or 21. ♖e6) White's chances are greater.

Deserving of serious consideration is 18... ♙xf2!? 19. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 20. ♖d8+ ♖g6 21. ♙xf6 ♖xf6 22. ♖xb7 ♖hf8!.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 19. ♖e6xc5+ | ♔f7-g6 |
| 20. ♜d1xe1  | ♔g6xg5 |
| 21. ♜c5xb7  |        |

White has a sufficient advantage to win. However, in order to convert it you need the accuracy Ivanchuk demonstrates. That stage, though, is beyond the bounds of our topic.

- |             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| 21. ...     | ♜c6-d4  |
| 22. ♜b7-d6  | ♜h8-f8  |
| 23. f2-f3   | b5-b4   |
| 24. ♜c3-e4+ | ♜f6xe4  |
| 25. ♜e1xe4  | ♜d4xb3+ |
| 26. a2xb3   | a6-a5   |
| 27. ♜e4-g4+ | ♔g5-f6  |
| 28. ♜d6-e4+ | ♔f6-e5  |
| 29. ♜g4-h4  | a5-a4   |
| 30. b3xa4   | ♜a8xa4  |
| 31. ♜e4-c5  | ♜a4-a1+ |
| 32. ♔c1-d2  | ♜f8-g8  |
| 33. g2-g3   | ♜a1-f1  |
| 34. ♔d2-e2  | ♜f1-b1  |
| 35. ♜h4xb4  | ♔e5-d5  |
| 36. ♜c5-e4  | ♔d5-c6  |
| 37. h2-h4   | ♜b1-h1  |
| 38. ♜b4-c4+ | ♔c6-b6  |
| 39. b2-b4   | ♜g8-d8  |
| 40. ♜c4-c5  | ♜d8-a8  |
| 41. c2-c3   | ♜a8-a2+ |
| 42. ♔e2-e3  | ♜h1-e1+ |
| 43. ♔e3-f4  | ♜e1-f1  |
| 44. ♜c5-h5  | ♜a2-a8  |
| 45. ♜h5-h6+ | ♔b6-b5  |
| 46. ♜e4-d6+ | ♔b5-a4  |
| 47. ♜h6xh7  | ♔a4-b3  |
| 48. ♜h7-c7  | ♜a8-d8  |
| 49. ♜d6-f5  | 1-0     |

It's a shame, of course, that the practical effect of such a wonderful sacrifice was pitifully small – only a single point in a rapid game. But such is the reality of modern chess life.

The following game, on the contrary, is completely devoid of external effects. You can't help but admire, however, the depth of penetration into the position, especially as it's probably a strictly human achievement – the MF is a poor assistant in such situations, at least for now.

[C67]  
Dmitry Yakovenko  
Wang Yue  
Elista 2008 (1)

Game 56

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 1. e2-e4   | e7-e5  |
| 2. ♜g1-f3  | ♜b8-c6 |
| 3. ♙f1-b5  | ♜g8-f6 |
| 4. 0-0     | ♜f6xe4 |
| 5. d2-d4   | ♜e4-d6 |
| 6. ♙b5xc6  | d7xc6  |
| 7. d4xe5   | ♜d6-f5 |
| 8. ♖d1xd8+ | ♔e8xd8 |

The Berlin Variation in general, and the given position in particular, were given a new lease of life after the Kasparov-Kramnik match in 2000. It was largely due to the re-evaluation of a whole class of positions arising here that Kramnik managed to defeat his powerful opponent. Of course, the whole variation quickly became extremely popular, but almost exclusively at the top level – in order to grasp all the nuances memory alone isn't enough, and the MF, as already mentioned, is an ineffectual assistant in this type of position.

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 9. ♜b1-c3 | ♔d8-e8 |
|-----------|--------|

Another possible plan is linked to evacuating the king to the queenside.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 10. h2-h3  | ♙f8-e7 |
| 11. g2-g4  | ♜f5-h4 |
| 12. ♜f3xh4 | ♙e7xh4 |

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 13. ♖f1-d1 | ♙h4-e7 |
| 14. ♜g1-g2 | h7-h5  |
| 15. f2-f3  | ♙c8-e6 |



This position is also far from new. Even at grandmaster level dozens of games have started from here. The theoretical dispute had added interest due to the fact that Wang Yue, an ardent devotee of the 'Berlin', had recently defended this position against Almasi and Adams, while Yakovenko had beaten Alexeev with white.

### 16. ♘c3-e2!

A plan introduced into practice by Karjakin. Previously White had usually chosen 16. ♙f4.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 16. ...     | ♜a8-d8 |
| 17. ♙c1-e3  | a7-a6  |
| 18. ♘e2-f4  | g7-g6  |
| 19. ♜d1xd8+ | ♙e8xd8 |
| 20. ♜a1-d1+ | ♙d8-c8 |

After the loss in this game Wang Yue by no means lost faith in this position. Against Leko (Nice blind 2009) he retreated the king to e8 (which looks sensible as the main events are developing on the kingside) and held the position. True, that game took place blindfold. Of course, far from everyone is ready again and again to play this uninspiring posi-

tion for Black, but it's well-known that there's no accounting for taste.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 21. ♘f4xe6 | f7xe6  |
| 22. f3-f4  | b7-b5  |
| 23. b2-b3  | ♜h8-h7 |
| 24. ♙e3-f2 | h5xg4  |

It was better not to rush this exchange, but White could have gradually forced it with the following regrouping: ♙g3, ♜h2 and then ♜f3-e4.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 25. h3xg4  | ♜h7-h8 |
| 26. ♜d1-h1 | ♜h8xh1 |
| 27. ♜g2xh1 | ♙c8-d7 |
| 28. ♜h1-g2 | ♙e7-b4 |
| 29. ♜g2-f3 | ♙d7-e8 |



Amazingly, exactly the same position arose in the previously mentioned Almasi-Wang Yue, Baku 2008. In that rapid game White automatically went for 30.c4, but didn't manage to break through his opponent's fortress. During his preparation Yakovenko managed to go deeper into the nuances of the position.

### 30. ♜f3-e4!

The exclamation mark isn't for the strength of this absolutely obvious move, but for the principled rejection of the c2-c4 continuation. The point of this subtlety will be revealed later:

30. ...	♔e8-e7
31. ♕f2-h4+	♔e7-e8
32. f4-f5	g6xf5+
33. g4xf5	e6xf5+
34. ♔e4xf5	♕b4-c3
35. ♕h4-f2	♔e8-e7
36. e5-e6	♔e7-e8
37. ♕f2-g3	♕c3-a5
38. ♕g3-e5	♕a5-b6



**39. c2-c3!**

Here's why the pawn had to remain on c2!

**39. ...                      c6-c5**

Due to the threat of 40. ♕d4 there's no way of avoiding this undesirable advance, and after it Black's bishop becomes an invalid.

**40. c3-c4!                      ♕b6-a5?**

Only this move is the decisive mistake. 40...bxc4! 41.bxc4 c6! was the only chance for Black. He loses the c5-pawn, but not the game. The 'right' square a8 becomes the key factor.

41. ♔f5-f6	c7-c6
42. e6-e7	♕a5-e1
43. ♔f6-e6	♕e1-h4
44. ♔e6-d6	♕h4xe7+
45. ♔d6xc6	b5xc4
46. b3xc4	♔e8-d8

47. ♕e5-d6	♕e7-h4
48. ♕d6xc5	♔d8-c8
49. ♔c6-b6	a6-a5
50. ♔b6xa5	♔c8-b7
51. ♔a5-b5	♕h4-g3
52. a2-a4	♔b7-a8
53. ♕c5-e3	♕g3-d6
54. ♕e3-d2	♔a8-b7

As it's impossible to give up the bishop for the pawn, Wang Yue resigned

1-0



**Dmitry Yakovenko**

Superficially this was an amazingly easy victory for White, but you can only imagine how much serious analytical work it required: predicting the opponent's choice of opening, spotting the flaws in what had seemed to be an impregnable fortress and then finding an elegant way of destroying it. Such achievements are rare, but that makes them all the more creatively satisfying. Even the lucky defensive resource on move 40 doesn't change this verdict. Yakovenko did his job perfectly and the full point was a well-deserved bonus for his hard work.

Grandmaster Morozevich is known for his original and sometimes even paradoxical decisions. His opening repertoire also stands out for being unconventional. For years he successfully played the Chigorin Defence, which until he came along wasn't considered to be an entirely correct opening. His ideas also significantly revived the Slav Defence. On this occasion, he played a new move in a variation of the Nimzo-Indian Defence that appeared to have been studied inside out.

[E39] Game 57

**Alexander Morozevich**  
**Ruslan Ponomariov**

Moscow 2008 (6)

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4  | ♘g8-f6 |
| 2. c2-c4  | e7-e6  |
| 3. ♖b1-c3 | ♙f8-b4 |
| 4. ♔d1-c2 | 0-0    |
| 5. ♘g1-f3 | c7-c5  |
| 6. d4xc5  | ♘b8-a6 |



## 7. c5-c6!?N

What moves haven't been people played in this long-familiar and well-studied position! Among the most widespread are: 7.a3; 7.g3; 7.♙d2; 7.e3, but the strange move made by Morozevich in this game hadn't occurred to anyone before him. Its objective virtues aren't

obvious, but at the same time it's by no means bad. If you also take into account the surprise factor, the drastic alteration of the pawn structure and the ensuing novel problems that need to be solved at the board, then it's an interesting and promising approach to the opening.

## 7. ... d7xc6

The other capture looks more natural – we were all taught in our childhood to take with a pawn towards the centre. Immediately after the main tournament there was a blitz tournament, in which that line was also given an express check: 7...bxc6 8.a3 ♙xc3+ (less logical is 8...♙e7 9.e4 d6 10.b4!? ♘b8 11.♙e2 a5 12.♖b1 axb4 13.axb4 ♘a6 Malakhov-Fedorchuk, Budva 2009) 9.♙xc3:

A) 9...d5 10.e3 (10.b4 ♘e4 11.♙c2 c5 12.b5 ♘c7 13.e3 a6 Carlsen-Leko) 10...♘c5 11.♙c2 ♘ce4 12.♙e2 a5 (12...♙b7 13.0-0 c5 14.b3 ♙e7 Morozevich-Alexeev) 13.b3 ♙b6 14.0-0 ♖b8 15.♖b1 ♙a6 Morozevich-Leko;

B) 9...♘c5 10.♙c2 a5 11.♙e3 ♘ce4 (11...♙e7 12.g3 a4 13.♙g2 ♙a6 Morozevich-Karpov) 12.c5 a4 13.♘d2 ♘xd2 14.♙xd2 ♙a6 15.g3 ♘d5 Morozevich-Ponomariov.

Although these games finished in various ways (blitz is blitz!), Black had no need to complain about the outcome of the opening. If you add Ivanchuk's idea – 7...d5!? 8.a3 (8.cxd5!?) 8...♙xc3+ 9.♙xc3 ♘e4 10.♙c2 bxc6 with fully-fledged play for Black (Morozevich-Ivanchuk, Leon rapid 2009), then you can consider the peak of the popularity of 7.c6!? to have passed.

## 8. a2-a3

8.g3!?

8. ... ♖b4xc3+  
9. ♔c2xc3 ♜a6-c5

Excessive activity connected with 9...♜e4?! leads to difficulties: 10.♔e5! ♜ac5 11.b4 f6 12.♔f4 ♜c3 13.♜d2 ♜5e4 14.♜xc3 ♜xc3 15.♔e3 ♜a4 16.♔b3 ♜b6 17.♜d1! (17.c5 ♔d5!).

10. ♜c1-e3!



10. ... ♜c5-e4?

The wrong knight! 10...♜fe4!? 11.♔c2 ♔a5+ 12.b4 (12.♜d2 ♜xd2 13.♜xd2 ♔a4 14.♔xa4 ♜xa4 15.0-0-0 ♜d8! also promises White little) 12...♔a4 13.♔b2!? ♜d7 14.g4! (the position after 14.g3 a5 15.♔d4 ♜df6 favours Black) 14...a5 15.♔d4 ♔b3 16.♔d3 ♔xd3 17.exd3 ♜d6. Chances are about even in this sharp position.

11. ♔c3-e5!

The e4-knight unexpectedly turns out to be in danger.

11. ... b7-b5?!

Strangely enough, there was no longer a satisfactory defence. Even after the more stubborn 11...♔e7 12.0-0-0 ♜d8 13.♜xd8+ ♔xd8 14.g4 ♜d6 15.♔f4 b5 16.g5 ♜h5 17.♔g4 g6 18.♜e5 White has an undoubted edge. Bad is 11...♔d6 12.♜d1 ♔xe5 13.♜xe5 or 11...c5 12.g4.

12. g2-g4!



It's remarkable, but by the 12th move, just five moves after 7.c6!?, it's time for Black to resign.

12. ... c6-c5

Relatively better was 12...h6 13.h4 ♜xf2 14.♜xf2 ♜xg4 but that's also bad.

13. g4-g5 ♔d8-a5+  
14. b2-b4 c5xb4  
15. g5xf6+—

White doesn't just have an extra piece but also an attack. Sometimes that turns out to be too much, but not in this game.

15. ... ♜c8-b7  
16. ♜e3-d2

16.♜g1 g6 17.♔xb5 is simpler.

16. ... ♜f8-c8  
17. ♜d2xb4 ♔a5-b6  
18. c4-c5 ♔b6-d8  
19. ♜h1-g1 g7-g6  
20. ♜a1-d1 ♔d8xf6  
21. c5-c6 ♜b7xc6  
22. ♜g1-g4 ♔f6xe5  
23. ♜f3xe5 f7-f5  
24. ♜e5xc6 ♜c8xc6  
25. ♜f1-g2



- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 25. ...    | a7-a5  |
| 26. ♖g2xe4 | f5xe4  |
| 27. ♖b4-d2 | ♜c6-c4 |
| 28. ♜g4-g5 | ♜c4-a4 |
| 29. ♜g5xb5 | ♜a4xa3 |
| 30. ♜b5-b7 | a5-a4  |
| 31. ♖d2-f4 | ♜a3-b3 |
| 32. ♜b7xb3 | a4xb3  |
| 33. ♜d1-b1 | e4-e3  |
| 34. ♖f4xe3 | ♜a8-b8 |
| 35. ♖e1-d2 | ♜b8-b4 |
| 36. f2-f3  | e6-e5  |
| 37. ♖e3-f2 | 1-0    |

The abrupt change of rhythm in a fairly hackneyed position knocked even as strong and experienced a player as Ponomarev off balance. However, Morozovich's innovation is an artificial product, and one hard to recommend as a method. What is possible when analysing opening positions, though, is to try and deliberately disregard the first lines of the computer and concentrate on the less obvious continuations. Perhaps you'll manage to find a fresh idea that suits your style and mood. In modern chess, when everyone's studying the first three or four lines, such an approach might bring you decent practical results. The overwhelming majority of illustrations in this chapter are taken from the games of elite grandmasters, but they're not the only people who work on chess.

The following example is, to my tastes, one of the most memorable in this selection.

[E94]

Game 58

**Sebastien Feller**  
**Manuel Apicella**

France tt 2009 (9)

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4   | ♞g8-f6 |
| 2. c2-c4   | g7-g6  |
| 3. ♞b1-c3  | ♞f8-g7 |
| 4. e2-e4   | d7-d6  |
| 5. ♞g1-f3  | 0-0    |
| 6. ♞f1-e2  | e7-e5  |
| 7. ♞c1-e3  | ♞b8-d7 |
| 8. 0-0     | ♜f8-e8 |
| 9. ♜d1-c2  | e5xd4  |
| 10. ♞f3xd4 | c7-c6  |
| 11. ♜a1-d1 | a7-a6  |
| 12. f2-f3  |        |



This position, arising from various move orders, can't be considered one of the most topical. It's even more remarkable, then, what happened in this variation. It began with the game Feller-Bacrot in the 2008 French Championship. Bacrot, after a long think, felt that something was up and rejected the most principled 12...d5. The neutral 12...♞c7 led to a slightly worse position for Black. But Feller's next opponent – Apicella – came to the game fully-armed.



**12. ... d6-d5!?**

A natural desire to exploit the the opposition of the pieces on the e-file.

**13. c4xd5 c6xd5**



**14. f3-f4!!**

A bolt from the blue! The move itself and, above all, the idea behind it, make an enormous impression. It also defeats the MF, which doesn't include it in the first ten lines at a depth of 14. It recommends the perfectly sensible and predictable 14.♖b3 ♘c5 15.♖a3 (15.♖b4 ♙f8!) 15...♘cd7 with a complex position. We can assume this had been the subject of Black's preparation for the game. But what's most amazing (and galling, for me) is that after being given 14.f4 to look at the machine very quickly reassesses its values, fully appreciating this amazing resource for White.

**14. ... d5xe4**

This 'French' story was continued at the European Team Championship in Novi Sad, when Fressinet, with the help of his teammate Feller, defeated McShane after demonstrating the drawbacks of the other capture: 14...♘xe4 15.♘xd5 ♘ef6 (15...♘dc5 is refuted by 16.f5! ♖xd5 17.fxg6 hxg6 18.♙c4 ♖h5

19.♙xf7+) 16.♘c7 ♜xe3 17.♘xa8 with an edge for White.

**15. g2-g4!**

Rybka's first line, although up to a point the machine doesn't fully believe in the strength of White's idea, evaluating the position as equal. However, you've got to assume that Feller had enough patience during his preparation to convince the MF.

**15. ... h7-h6**

Strangely enough, Bologan, an acknowledged expert in the King's Indian Defence, also decided to test out the correctness of White's idea. However, after 15...♖a5 16.g5 ♘h5 17.♙xh5 gxh5 18.b4! ♖c7 (perhaps the lesser evil was 18...♖xb4 19.♘d5 ♖c5 20.♘c7 ♙xd4 21.♖xc5 ♙xc5 22.♙xc5 ♘xc5 23.♘xe8 ♙h3 24.♘f6+ ♔g7 25.♜fe1 although it's also hard for Black to survive here) 19.♘d5! ♖xc2 20.♘xc2 ♘f8 21.f5 ♙e5 22.♙d4 he ended up in an extremely difficult situation, Gyimesi-Bologan, European Championship, Rijeka 2010.

**16. g4-g5 h6xg5**  
**17. f4xg5 ♘f6-h7**  
**18. ♜f1xf7! ♘h7xg5**

At first the MF thinks 18...♙xd4 leads to equality, but there's no need to argue with the mindless machine, as you just need to give it some time to think and then it comes up with the first line: 19.♙xd4 ♖xg5+ 20.♔h1 ♔xf7 21.♘xe4 ♜xe4 22.♖xe4 ♘df6 23.♜f1 ♙d7 24.♖xb7 ♜d8 25.♙b6 ♔e7 26.♙xd8+ ♔xd8 27.♖xa6±.

**19. ♜f7-f1 ♜e8-e5**  
**20. ♔g1-h1 ♔g8-h7**

**21. ♖e3-f4?!**

It seems it was only at this point that White began to create independently. The MF clearly prefers 21.♖c4!. It's hard to know what was behind that: in his home analysis did it seem to Feller that all roads lead to Rome? Or did his memory let him down? I'm inclined towards the second version.

**21. ... ♜d8-e7!****22. ♖f4xe5 ♜e7xe5****23. ♖d4-f5?!**

Passionate, beautiful and humanly understandable, but in a struggle against an iron intellect it would be insufficient. He should have calmly included the queen in the military actions: 23.♖g4 ♖c5 24.♜g2 or 23.♜c1 (with the idea of 24.♜e3) 23...e3 24.♖f3.

**23. ... ♖d7-f6?!**

The MF indicates a path to a forced draw: 23...gxf5! 24.♞d5 ♜e7 25.♞dxf5 ♖b6! 26.♞xg5 (26.♞f4 ♖e6 27.♖xe4 ♖g8! 28.♖xg5 ♜xg5 is weaker) 26...♜xg5 27.♜xe4+ ♜g6 28.♜h4+ ♜h6 29.♖d3+ ♖g8 30.♜d8+ ♖f8. Here as well the MF insists that all sensible moves lead to a peaceful outcome. I'll limit myself to showing the most picturesque path:

31.♖d5 ♖d7! 32.♖e7+ ♜h8  
33.♖g6+ ♜g8 34.♖e7+ ♜g7  
35.♞g1+ ♖f7 36.♞f1+.

**24. ♖f5xg7 ♜h7xg7****25. ♞f1xf6!?**

Remaining true to the method of brute force. White stood better after 25.♜d2!? ♖h3 26.♜f4!.

**25. ... ♜e5xf6****26. ♖c3-d5 ♜f6-c6****27. ♜c2-d2 ♖g5-e6?**

Black's desire not to allow 28.♜d4+ is understandable. However, after 27...♖f7 28.♜d4+ ♖f8 29.♜b4+ ♖g7 30.♜xe4 ♖f5 31.♜d4+ ♖f8 32.♖f3 ♞d8 White's slight edge isn't enough for victory.

**28. ♜d2-b4**

28.b4!.

**28. ... ♖e6-c5?**

28...♖g5.

**29. ♜b4-d4+ ♖g7-h7****30. ♖d5-e7 ♜c6-b6****31. ♞d1-c1 ♖c5-a4****32. ♜d4xa4 ♜b6-e3****33. ♞c1-c7 ♖h7-h6****34. ♜a4-e8 ♖c8-f5****35. ♖e7xf5+ 1-0**

You can only sympathise with Black – he had to undergo too many trials in this game!

I'd put 14.f4!! on top of the hit parade of the most wonderful moves in this book. The recent scandal around the young French grandmaster has had no influence on my assessment. This game demonstrates Feller's great creative potential: a paradoxical idea and deep and accurate analysis of all the ramifications – preparation of the very highest class. As for the inaccuracies in the middle of the game, that's a topic we've already touched upon. It's extremely tough to quickly switch from the comfortable mode of 'we had this at home' to the tense rhythm of taking decisions at the board.

The following game is, in a sense, a prototype of the chess of the near future. Or, to be more precise, of how this author sees it: an ideal marriage between the human's creative impulse and the accuracy and infallibility of the MF. The encounter could easily serve as a model of modern preparation. Of course, not all chess players possess the intuition and imagination of Magnus Carlsen. Given that, it would be appropriate to use the prompts of the failsafe MF. 'The realm of general knowledge' – the top lines of the programs – is consciously ignored, as your opponents also study that carefully. The search for new possibilities takes place at great depths and the attitude to the opening is somewhat altered: it's not about obtaining an advantage with white or clearly equalising with black, but about getting a playable position which you understand better than your opponent. Of course, achieving that requires enor-

mous work during preparation, self-confidence and... greater class. All of that was demonstrated by the young Norwegian in this encounter.

[D97]

Game 59

**Magnus Carlsen**

**Lenier Dominguez Perez**

Wijk aan Zee 2010 (11)

- |    |        |        |
|----|--------|--------|
| 1. | d2-d4  | ♘g8-f6 |
| 2. | c2-c4  | g7-g6  |
| 3. | ♞b1-c3 | d7-d5  |
| 4. | ♞g1-f3 | ♙f8-g7 |
| 5. | ♚d1-b3 | d5xc4  |
| 6. | ♚b3xc4 | 0-0    |
| 7. | e2-e4  | a7-a6  |
| 8. | e4-e5  | b7-b5  |
| 9. | ♚c4-b3 | ♞f6-d7 |



A well-known position that's been tried more than once at the very highest level.

10. ♞f3-g5!?

A theoretical novelty. Its objective value isn't so obvious, but the fact that Rybka doesn't include this move in its top ten (!) lines at a depth of 14 immediately dramatically increases both the psychological and practical effect of Carlsen's find. He could predict in advance that his opponent wouldn't have looked at this continuation in his preparation,

which is already a great success in modern chess. Normal moves in this position are 10.♖e2 and 10.♖e3, while the move most often encountered in practice is the sharp 10.e6. However, in the opinion of the MF none of these moves alters the evaluation of the position as approximately equal.

- |              |        |
|--------------|--------|
| 10. ...      | ♘d7-b6 |
| 11. ♖c1-e3   | ♘b8-c6 |
| 12. ♖a1-d1   | ♘c8-f5 |
| 13. ♖f1-e2!? |        |

Lines like 13.e6 ♘xd4 (or 13...f6 14.♘f7 ♖c8 15.d5 ♘a5 16.♖b4 ♘ac4) 14.♖xd4 ♖xd4 15.♘xf7 ♖xe6 16.♘xd8 ♖xf2+ 17.♖e2 ♖xb3 18.axb3 ♖axd8 19.♖xd8 ♖xd8 20.♖xf2 ♖d2+ are absolutely unclear, besides in no way corresponding to the Norwegian's style.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 13. ...    | ♘c6-a5 |
| 14. ♖b3-b4 | ♘a5-c4 |
| 15. 0-0    | f7-f6  |

Black has, up until now, resisted the obvious attack on the g5-knight with ...h7-h6, and now extracts certain dividends from that: White's pawn centre has been attacked with tempo.

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 16. ♘g5-f3 | ♘c4xe3  |
| 17. f2xe3  | f6xe3!? |

17...c6 18.e4 ♖e6 19.d5 cxd5 20.♘d4 looks very dangerous, but after 20...♖d7 Black holds. Also interesting is 17...♘d5 18.♘xd5 ♖xd5 19.♖xe7 ♖xa2, although in both cases the position is tactical, and up until this point the Cuban grandmaster had used up a lot of time and energy – which was the main consequence of Carlsen's opening find. Black's desire to stabilise the pawn situation in the centre is perfectly natu-

ral and understandable, but it has pure chess drawbacks: it opens up the d-file for White, and the main thing is that it provides him with the crucial d4-square.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 18. d4xe5  | ♖d8-e8 |
| 19. ♖b4-c5 | ♖a8-c8 |
| 20. a2-a4  |        |

It looks more natural to play 20.♘d4! but after the forced 20...♘d7 21.♖a3 ♘xe5 you have to find 22.♘d5!, which is much stronger than the superficial 22.♖xa6 or 22.♘xf5. In that case White's chances would be preferable.

- |         |        |
|---------|--------|
| 20. ... | ♘b6xa4 |
|---------|--------|

After 20...♖c2!? White could sacrifice the exchange: 21.axb5!? ♖xd1 22.♖xd1 with sufficient compensation.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 21. ♘c3xa4 | b5xa4  |
| 22. ♘f3-d4 | ♖c8-b8 |



It seems as though Black has no problems: all his pieces are in play, and the extra pawn, although doubled, is also a serious factor. In order to maintain the flagging tension White has to come up with something.

- |             |
|-------------|
| 23. g2-g4!? |
|-------------|

An unexpected resource. The obvious 23.♘c6 achieved nothing because of

23...♖b6! (clearly worse is 23...♖xb2  
24.♙c4+ ♘h8 25.♜d8 ♚xd8 26.♜xd8  
♜xd8 27.♚xe7) 24.♜xe7+ ♘h8.

### 23. ... ♙f5-e4!

A little weaker is 23...♙d7?! 24.♜xf8+  
♙xf8 (24...♚xf8? 25.♚d5+;  
24...♘f8? 25.e6) 25.e6 ♙c8 26.♙f3  
and Black has to make a few only moves  
so as not to lose immediately: 26...♖b6!  
(26...♙b7? 27.♙xb7 ♜xb7 28.♜c6;  
26...♖xb2? 27.♚xc7) 27.♚xc7 ♜d6  
28.♜c1 ♙h6! 29.♚c3!. This is the only  
way White could maintain a certain  
edge, as other moves are clearly worse:  
29.♚xc8 ♙xe3+ 30.♙f1 ♜d8 or  
29.♙f2 ♜xd4.

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 24. ♜d4-e6 | ♜f8xf1+ |
| 25. ♙e2xf1 | c7-c6!  |
| 26. ♜e6-g5 | ♙e4-d5  |
| 27. e3-e4! |         |

The risky 27.♜xd5? cxd5 28.♚xd5+

A) leads to a draw after 28...♘h8  
29.♜f7+ ♘g8 30.♜h6+ – 30.♜d6+?  
even loses because of 30...e6;

B) but 28...e6! 29.♜xe6 ♚f7 only  
creates problems for White.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 27. ...     | ♙d5-b3 |
| 28. ♙f1-c4+ | e7-e6! |
| 29. ♜g5xe6  | ♙b3xc4 |
| 30. ♚c5xc4  |        |



### 30. ... ♘g8-h8?

In serious time trouble such moves are  
made automatically, but alas, this loses.  
A draw could have been achieved by the  
composed 30...♙xe5!. For example:  
31.♜g5+ ♘h8 (also possible was  
31...♘g7 32.♜f1 ♘h8 33.♜f7+ ♘g7  
34.♜g5 ♘h8) 32.♜f7+ ♘g7 33.♜xe5  
♚xe5 34.♚xc6 ♚xb2 35.♚c7+ ♘h8  
36.♜d8+.

- |             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| 31. ♜e6xg7  | ♘h8xg7  |
| 32. e5-e6!  | ♜b8-b7  |
| 33. ♚c4-c3+ | ♘g7-g8  |
| 34. ♜d1-d6! | ♜b7-e7  |
| 35. ♜d6xc6  | ♚e8-f8  |
| 36. ♜c6-c8  | ♜e7-e8  |
| 37. ♜c8xe8  | ♚f8xe8  |
| 38. ♚c3-f6  | ♚e8-c8  |
| 39. ♘g1-g2  | ♚c8-c2+ |
| 40. ♘g2-h3  | ♚c2-c5  |

40...♚c7 41.e7 ♚c8 42.♘h4 changes  
nothing.

- |             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| 41. ♘h3-h4  | ♚c5-b4  |
| 42. ♚f6-f7+ | ♘g8-h8  |
| 43. e6-e7   | ♚b4-e1+ |
| 44. ♘h4-g5  | ♚e1-e3+ |
| 45. ♚f7-f4  | 1-0     |

Dominguez safely solved his opening  
problems and successfully defended in  
the middlegame but was ultimately un-  
able to withstand the tension that his  
opponent had skilfully maintained.  
Here an entirely appropriate conclusion  
would be: perhaps Black didn't deserve  
to lose this game, but Carlsen no doubt  
deserved to win!

Of course you rarely manage to find an  
option like that just before a game, as  
such ideas are usually accumulated dur-  
ing the process of more serious and  
fundamental preparation.

The following example could easily be described as typical of modern chess.

[E20]

Game 60

**Ruslan Ponomariov**

**Vugar Gashimov**

Astrakhan 2010 (11)

- |          |        |
|----------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4 | g8-f6  |
| 2. c2-c4 | e7-e6  |
| 3. g1-f3 | c7-c5  |
| 4. g2-g3 | c5xd4  |
| 5. f3xd4 | f8-b4+ |
| 6. b1-c3 | f6-e4  |
| 7. d1-d3 | e4xc3  |

At the dawn of the development of this variation in the 1970s Black almost exclusively played 7...a5 here, but lately as well as the move in the game popularity has been achieved by the line 7...xc3+ 8.bxc3 c5.

- |            |       |
|------------|-------|
| 8. b2xc3   | b4-e7 |
| 9. c1-f4!? |       |

This move was most likely looked at during the process of preparing directly for this game. The probability that Gashimov would choose precisely this variation was quite high. It had already occurred twice in Vugar's games:

A) 9.g2 0-0 10.0-0 draw, P.H. Nielsen-Gashimov, Havana 2007;

B) 9.b5 c6 10.d6+ (10.g2 0-0 11.f4 e5 12.c1! b6 13.0-0 b7 14.d1 occurred in Aronian-Karjakin, Tal Memorial Moscow 2010) 10...xd6 11.xd6 a5 12.d2 e5 13.d3 d5 14.g2 dxc4 15.xc4, l'Ami-Gashimov, Dresden Olympiad 2008. In the last game Black experienced some problems, but Ponomariov decided not to test out his opponent's analysis.

- |        |       |
|--------|-------|
| 9. ... | d7-d6 |
|--------|-------|

A natural but far from only move. Also possible were 9...c6; 9...a6 and even the provocative 9...g5!?

- |           |       |
|-----------|-------|
| 10. d4-b5 | e6-e5 |
|-----------|-------|



- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| 11. c4-c5! |  |
|------------|--|

And here are the main fruits of the home preparation. In the only game before this where 9.f4 was played, there followed 11.e3 a6 (11...c6; 11...e6) 12.a7! d7 13.g2 c6 14.xc6 xc6 and Black didn't have any particular problems: Mastrovasilis-Fedorchuk, Cappelle la Grande 2010. However, Ruslan's task wasn't particularly complex – Rybka immediately gives this spectacular move as its first line and continues to consider it the best, leaving Mastrovasilis' choice as the second line.

- |                  |       |
|------------------|-------|
| 11. ...          | e5xf4 |
| 12. c5xd6        | 0-0   |
| 12...f6? 13.c7+. |       |
| 13. d6xe7        | d8xe7 |
| 14. f1-g2        |       |

It's perfectly possible that 11.c5! came as no great surprise to Black. Gashimov had probably analysed similar positions, and the computer's first line shouldn't, in principle, have escaped his attention. Ponomariov would have had to take that into account during his preparation. As

well as the natural move in the game the more energetic 14. ♖d6!? was also interesting, after which the best reply is probably 14... ♘c6! (after both 14... ♖xd6 15. ♘xd6 fxf3 16. hxf3 ♖d8 17. 0-0-0 and 14... ♖e4 15. ♖g1 White maintains an initiative) 15. ♖xe7 ♘xe7 16. gxf4 ♘d5, winning back the pawn.

14. ... ♖f8-d8  
15. ♘b5-d4 ♖e7-c7

15... fxf3 16. hxf3 h6 is also perfectly possible. The open h-file doesn't bring White any particular dividends.

16. 0-0 f4xg3  
17. h2xg3 ♘b8-c6  
18. ♖a1-b1



The home preparation hasn't brought White any great benefits – Black's position is perfectly defendable – but his opponent had used up no small amount of effort and emotions, and that factor could turn out to be decisive later on. For that, however, it's essential to maintain the tension, which is what Ponomarev skilfully does.

18. ... ♖c8-d7  
19. ♖f1-d1 ♘c6-a5

In order to fully equalise Black only needs to play ... ♖ac8, but it's White to move!

20. ♖g2-e4! g7-g6  
21. ♖d3-f3 ♖d7-c6

21... ♖ab8 22. ♖d5.

22. ♘d4xc6 ♖d8xd1+  
23. ♖b1xd1 ♘a5xc6  
24. ♖e4-d5 ♖a8-e8  
25. c3-c4 ♖c7-e7  
26. ♖g1-g2 h7-h5?!

Premature activity. More circumspect was 26... ♘e5 27. ♖c3 b6.

27. ♖d1-d3! ♖g8-g7

Forced! Worse is 27... ♘e5 28. ♖e4 ♘h7 29. ♖e3 ♖d7 30. ♖f4.

28. ♖f3-f4 ♖e8-f8

There's no pleasure in making such moves. For the moment White doesn't have any direct threats, but it's also hard to defend. It looked more natural to play 28... ♖c8 29. ♖f3 f6 30. ♖e3 ♖c7 although you also don't want to weaken the seventh rank.

29. ♖d3-e3 ♖e7-d7



30. a2-a3!

A wonderful prophylactic move, particularly unpleasant for your opponent to meet in time trouble. It's now impossible to approach the d5-bishop.

**30. ... ♖d7-d8**

30...♖e8? 31.♖xe8 ♖xe8 32.♖c7.

**31. ♖e3-b3 ♖d8-d7**

**32. e2-e4 ♖d7-e7**

Possibly more accurate was 32...f6, preventing the e4-e5 advance and closing the a1-h8 diagonal.

**33. ♖f4-d2! ♔g7-h7**

**34. ♖d2-b2 ♘c6-d8**

**35. ♚b3-f3! ♘d8-c6**

After 35...b6 there's the extremely unpleasant 36.♖f6 ♘e6 (36...♘b7 37.e5) 37.♖e5 ♖xa3 38.♙xe6 fxe6 39.♖c7+ ♔h6 40.e5! and White dominates.

**36. e4-e5! a7-a5?**



Black's defence was complicated by approaching time trouble. It was hard to decide on the relatively better 36...♘e5, but also in that case after 37.♖e3 f6 38.f4 ♖c5 39.♖xb7+ ♔h6 40.♖b4 ♘d7 41.♖e7 a5 42.♖xc5 ♘xc5 43.♖c7 White's chances are clearer better in the endgame. The impulsive last move, typical of time trouble, worsens Black's position even more.

**37. e5-e6! f7-f5**

Also bad is 37...fxe6 38.♖xf8 ♖xf8 39.♖xb7+ ♘e7 40.♙xe6.

**38. ♖b2-b6**

38.♖b3! ♘d8 39.♖e5+.

**38. ... ♖f8-e8**

**39. ♖f3-e3 ♖e8-c8**

**40. ♖e3-d3 ♔h7-g8**

**41. ♖b6-e3!**

With the threat of 42.♖h6.

**41. ... g6-g5**

**42. ♙d5xc6 b7xc6**

**43. ♖d3-d7 ♖e7-f6**

**44. ♖d7-f7 ♖f6-g6**

**45. ♖e3-e5 f5-f4**

**46. ♖f7-f5 f4-f3+**

**47. ♔g2-h2 1-0**

At first glance the theoretical novelty didn't play such a significant role – after all, White's advantage after the opening seemed only symbolic. However, the psychological initiative was on Ponomarev's side right from the outset and he was better prepared than his opponent for the character of the ensuing position. Ultimately, when the struggle was entering its decisive stage, Gashimov turned out to be too tired after resolving the preceding problems and the chess difficulties were exacerbated by time trouble. This game can also, to an extent, serve as a model of modern preparation in chess. A new continuation in the opening, sometimes even one which is quite predictable for your opponent, is in no way intended to immediately decide the fate of the game. The surprise merely guarantees a springboard for developing an initiative. Here it's perfectly appropriate to compare it to tennis, where a powerful serve is a very serious advantage but by no means guarantees ultimate success. Moreover, the strength of the serve should correspond



to the speed of reaction and speed of movement over the court of the server himself – otherwise it can come back as a boomerang. In modern chess opening theory should also be tied to the personality of the player: the features of his style, temperament and, last but not least, his memory. Otherwise the work done can even end up being harmful.

To conclude, I'll give six more games which give an indication of the current situation in chess at the highest level. They were played by grandmasters whose credentials aren't in doubt – professionals in the full meaning of the word, who devote a lot of time and attention to preparation. So both the achievements and mistakes of the players can in no way be described as random. On the contrary, they're quite typical of chess in the 2010s.

The first two games were played at the Olympiad in Khanty-Mansiysk and had not only an important theoretical subtext, but also huge sporting significance.

[D43]

Game 61

**Maxime Vachier-Lagrave**  
**Boris Gelfand**

Khanty-Mansiysk Olympiad 2010 (3)

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4   | d7-d5  |
| 2. c2-c4   | c7-c6  |
| 3. ♖b1-c3  | ♘g8-f6 |
| 4. ♖g1-f3  | e7-e6  |
| 5. ♙c1-g5  | h7-h6  |
| 6. ♙g5-h4  | d5xc4  |
| 7. e2-e4   | g7-g5  |
| 8. ♙h4-g3  | b7-b5  |
| 9. ♙f1-e2  | ♙c8-b7 |
| 10. h2-h4  | g5-g4  |
| 11. ♘f3-e5 | ♚h8-g8 |
| 12. ♙e2xg4 | ♘b8-d7 |

13. ♘e5xd7      ♚d8xd7  
14. ♙g4-f3



14. ...      b5-b4

Gelfand had already played the diagram position, but as White. His opponent Leko played 14...c5 but after 15.e5! (weaker is 15.dxc5 ♚xd1+ 16.♚xd1 a6 17.e5 ♙xf3 18.gxf3 ♘h5 19.♘e4 ♚c8 20.♙f4 f5 21.♘d6+ ♙xd6 22.cxd6 ♚c5= Gelfand-Leko, Miskolc rapid 2010) 15...♘d5 16.♘e4 cxd4 17.♚xd4 White maintains the initiative. In his analysis Boris had probably come to the conclusion that Black was fine. Vachier-Lagrave also hadn't overlooked this encounter, and on this occasion his collaboration with the MF turned out to be more productive.

15. ♘c3-a4      c6-c5  
16. ♘a4xc5      ♙f8xc5  
17. d4xc5



**17. ... ♖f6xe4**

For now the players are following the beaten path. After 17...♖xe4 very strong is 18.♙d6!. Instead 18.♗xd7+?! ♖xd7 19.0-0-0+? (19.♙c1=) 19...♖c6 20.♙d6? ♙xf3 21.gxf3 ♘d5 with an edge for Black, Sakaev-Maletin, St Petersburg 2009.

**18. ♗d1xd7+ ♖e8xd7  
19. 0-0-0+!**

Only after this natural move does the game take on an original character. 19.♙d1+ ♖e7 20.♙d6+ ♖e8 21.0-0 a5 22.♙f4 ♘xc5 23.♙xb7 ♘xb7 24.♙xh6 with equality was seen in the correspondence game Holmberg-Van Oosterom, 2007.

**19. ... ♖d7-e8  
20. ♙g3-f4!**

A strong move, although at first the MF only considers it first among equals. 20.♙d4 ♘xg3 21.♙xb7 ♘e2+ 22.♖b1 ♘xd4 23.♙xa8 c3 favours Black. 20.c6 ♙xc6 21.♙he1 f5 leads to an equal position. Only many moves later, having subjected the position to a fundamental re-evaluation, does the MF implicitly alter its opinion on the move in the game.

**20. ... ♘e4xc5  
21. ♙f3xb7 ♘c5xb7  
22. ♙f4xh6 ♘b7-c5?**

And again the clear first line, but in fact it's almost the decisive mistake! 22...♙xg2, allowing 23.♙e3, cutting off the b7-knight, retained more chances of survival. For example: 23...♖e7 24.h5 ♙g7 25.h6 ♙h7.

**23. ♙h6-e3 ♘c5-d3+  
24. ♖c1-b1!**

An important nuance! 24.♖c2 ♙xg2 forced 25.♙hg1 (25.h5 ♘xf2) 25...♙xg1 26.♙xg1 ♖e7 with good chances of a draw for Black.

**24. ... ♙g8xg2  
25. h4-h5 f7-f5  
26. h5-h6 ♖e8-f7  
27. h6-h7 ♙a8-h8**



**28. b2-b3!**

Undoubtedly the best move, although quite obvious. I've got no doubt Maxime had already had this position on the board (or, more likely, on the computer screen). But for a final evaluation of this variation that's still insufficient. Even at a depth of 16 my Rybka 3 evaluates this position as only slightly better for White.

**28. ... e6-e5**

28...f4 29.♙d4 e5 30.bxc4 ♘xf2 31.♙xe5 ♘xh1 32.♙xh8 ♙h2 33.♙d7+ ♖g6 34.c5+—.

**29. b3xc4! ♘d3xf2  
30. ♙e3xf2 ♙g2xf2  
31. c4-c5!+—**

It's only here that the MF has an epiphany: Black's position can't be saved. That discovery can't have brought much joy to Gelfand either, but it's too late to change anything.

### 31. ... ♖f2-f3

Rybka gives the most stubborn defence as 31...b3 32.axb3 ♖f3. But the evaluation of the position after 33.♖d7+ ♖f6 34.♗c2 doesn't raise any doubts: White should win.

- |                    |               |
|--------------------|---------------|
| <b>32. c5-c6</b>   | <b>♖f3-c3</b> |
| <b>33. ♖d1-d7+</b> | <b>♗f7-g6</b> |
| <b>34. c6-c7</b>   | <b>f5-f4</b>  |
| <b>35. ♖d7-d6+</b> |               |

35.♖g1+ is just as good.

- |                    |               |
|--------------------|---------------|
| <b>35. ...</b>     | <b>♗g6-g7</b> |
| <b>36. ♖h1-g1+</b> | <b>♗g7-f7</b> |
| <b>37. ♖d6-d8</b>  | <b>1-0</b>    |

[B12]

Game 62

**Sergey Karjakin**  
**Pavel Elianov**

Khanty-Mansiysk Olympiad 2010 (8)

- |                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| <b>1. e2-e4</b>  | <b>c7-c6</b>   |
| <b>2. d2-d4</b>  | <b>d7-d5</b>   |
| <b>3. e4-e5</b>  | <b>♗c8-f5</b>  |
| <b>4. ♗g1-f3</b> | <b>e7-e6</b>   |
| <b>5. ♗f1-e2</b> | <b>c6-c5</b>   |
| <b>6. ♗c1-e3</b> | <b>♖d8-b6</b>  |
| <b>7. ♗b1-c3</b> | <b>♖b6xb2!</b> |



This extremely interesting position had already arisen in the careers of both players, so they came to this game fully-armed. As well as capturing the

pawn Black has another option: 7...♗c6!? 8.0-0 (less principled is 8.♗a4 ♖a5+ 9.c3 c4 10.0-0 b5 11.♗c5 ♗xc5 12.dxc5 ♗ge7 13.♗d4 a6 14.f4 ♗e4 with complex play, Yakovenko-Elianov, Sochi 2010) 8...♖xb2 9.♖e1!? (9.♗b5!? c4! 10.♗c7+ ♗d7 11.♗xa8 ♗xc2 12.♖e1 ♗b4 13.♗d2 ♗ge7, which took place in the game Karjakin-Morozevich, Nice (blindfold) 2009, seemed not to fully satisfy Sergey) 9...cxd4 10.♗xd4 ♗xd4 11.♗xd4 ♗b4 12.♗db5 ♗a5 (an improvement on what was played in the same tournament. 12...♗xc3 13.♗xc3 a6 14.♖b1 ♖a3 15.♖xb7 ♗e7 16.♗b5+ ♗f8 17.♗d3 Karjakin-Tukhaev, Plovdiv 2010) 13.♖b1 ♖xc2 14.♖b3 ♗e7 15.♗d6+ ♗f8 16.♗xb7 ♗b6 17.♗d6 ♗a5 18.♗b7 ♗b6 with a draw in Smirnov-Maletin, Plovdiv 2010.

### 8. ♖d1-b1

Of interest is 8.♗b5 ♗xc2! 9.♖c1 ♖xc1+ 10.♖xc1 ♗g6 11.♗c7+ ♗d7 12.♗xa8 c4 13.♗h4 ♗c6 14.♗xg6 hxg6 15.0-0 ♗b4 with compensation for the sacrificed material, Su.Be. Hansen-Berkes, Heraklion 2007.

- |                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| <b>8. ...</b>     | <b>♖b2xb1+</b> |
| <b>9. ♖a1xb1</b>  | <b>c5-c4</b>   |
| <b>10. ♖b1xb7</b> | <b>♗b8-c6</b>  |



### 11. ♖c3-b5!?

The most principled move. 11.♖d2 ♙b4 12.♞b1 ♙a5 13.g4!? ♙xg4 14.♞xf7 ♙xf3 15.♞xf3 ♖ge7 brought Black success in Inarkiev-Eliaov, Astrakhan 2010. Although in this line White also has possible improvements it seems the move in the game poses more problems.

11. ... ♖c6-d8  
12. ♞b7-c7!

12.♞xa7 ♞xa7 13.♖xa7 ♙xc2.

12. ... ♞a8-b8  
13. ♖b5-d6+ ♙f8xd6  
14. e5xd6 ♞b8-b1+  
15. ♙e2-d1 ♙f5xc2  
16. ♖e1-d2 ♙c2xd1  
17. ♞h1xd1 ♞b1-b6

17...♞b2+ 18.♖c3 ♞xa2 19.♞b1 ♞a6  
20.♙f4 ♞b6 21.♞xb6 axb6 22.♖b4.

18. ♙e3-f4! ♖g8-f6  
19. ♞c7-e7+ ♖e8-f8  
20. ♞e7xa7 ♖f6-e4+  
21. ♖d2-c2 f7-f6



### 22. h2-h4!

Karjakin played all his moves, including the last, instantly, using his whole appearance to demonstrate his confidence both in his own position and the flaw-

lessness of his analysis. Eliaov was emanating somewhat less optimism. White's last very strong move knocked him into a trance. Its idea is to rule out Black's possible counterplay connected with ...g7-g5. For now, at least, it's quite hard for the MF to find such prophylactic moves. You have to ram it home to it that Black's position is practically hopeless. Little was promised by 22.♞b1 ♞xb1 23.♖xb1 g5 24.♙c1 ♞g8 25.♞xh7 ♞g7 26.♞h8+ ♞g8 27.♞h7 ♞g7 and White has no more than a repetition.

22. ... ♖e4xf2

Black can't be happy with 22...h6 23.h5 ♖g8 24.♞b1 ♞xb1 25.♖xb1 ♖h7. No good at all is 22...♖xd6? 23.♞b1.

23. ♞d1-b1 ♞b6xb1  
24. ♖c2xb1 ♖f2-e4  
25. a2-a4 ♞h8-g8  
26. a4-a5 ♖d8-c6  
27. ♞a7-a6!

Here there's already more than one path to the goal: 27.d7 ♖d8 28.♞a8 ♖f7 (28...♖e7 29.♞b8!) 29.a6 ♖c3+ 30.♖c2 ♖b5 31.♞b8 ♖a7 32.♙d6 is also sufficient for a win.

27. ... ♖c6-b8

It also alters nothing to play 27...♖d8 28.♞a8 ♖f7 29.♞c8.

28. ♞a6-a7 ♖b8-c6  
29. d6-d7! ♖c6-d8

29...♖e7 30.d8♞+ ♖xd8 31.♞a8+.

30. ♖b1-c2 ♖f8-e7  
31. a5-a6 e6-e5  
32. ♙f4-c1

32.dxe5 ♖c5 33.♞a8 is simple and strong.

### 32. ... ♖e7-d6

Initially the MF has illusions about 32...♖d6 but having discovered the variation 33.♙a3 e4 (33...♙e6 34.♙xd6 ♖xd6 35.dxe5+ fxe5 36.♙a8) 34.♙c7! exf3 35.gxf3 ♖e6 36.♙c8 it waves the white flag.

### 33. ♙c1-a3+ ♖d6-c6 34. ♙a7-a8 1-0

In both cases you can only admire the quality of the winner's preparation. The role of the MF in that work was strictly subordinate. Both Maxime and Sergey didn't trust the machine's evaluation and continued to analyse the position more deeply, and their persistent quests were crowned by real discoveries. In both cases positions that superficially looked harmless for Black proved to be extremely difficult. Boris and Pavel, on the other hand, at some point relied on the opinion of the MF and became hostages to its short-sightedness.

The following example is even more instructive.

[D38]

Game 63

Levon Aronian

Vladimir Kramnik

Moscow 2010 (1)

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4  | ♖g8-f6 |
| 2. c2-c4  | e7-e6  |
| 3. ♖b1-c3 | ♙f8-b4 |
| 4. ♖g1-f3 | d7-d5  |
| 5. c4xd5  | e6xd5  |
| 6. ♙c1-g5 | h7-h6  |
| 7. ♙g5-h4 | c7-c5  |
| 8. d4xc5  | ♖b8-d7 |

The height of fashion. In the 1970s, when the theory of this variation was just being formed, it was considered al-

most obligatory to play 8...♖c6, but not long before this game Kramnik succeeded with 8...0-0. There followed 9.♙c1 g5 10.♙g3 ♖e4 11.e3 ♙a5 12.♙e5 ♙xa2 13.♙d3 ♙xb2 14.♙xe4 dxe4 15.♙c2 ♙b3 16.♖d2 ♙e6 with excellent play for Black, Ponomarev-Kramnik, Nice rapid 2010.

### 9. ♙a1-c1 ♙d8-a5



### 10. a2-a3!?

A completely fresh idea. Previously White had exclusively played 10.♙d4 here.

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 10. ...    | ♙b4xc3+ |
| 11. ♙c1xc3 | ♖f6-e4  |
| 12. b2-b4  | ♖e4xc3  |
| 13. ♙d1-a1 |         |

Equivalent are 13.♙c1 or 13.♙b3.

### 13. ... ♙a5-a4

In the source game Black played 13...♙a6 and after 14.♙xc3 ♙g6 15.e3 ♙b1+ 16.♖d2 0-0 17.♙g1 a5 18.♙c4 axb4 19.axb4 ♙e4 20.♙d3 ♙e6 a very sharp position arose with mutual chances, Delchev-Palac, Khanty-Mansiysk Olympiad 2010.

- |            |       |
|------------|-------|
| 14. ♙a1xc3 | 0-0   |
| 15. e2-e3  | a7-a5 |
| 16. b4-b5  |       |



16. ... ♖d7xc5!!

A fantastic resource, fundamentally altering the situation on the board. A calmer course of events would favour White: 16...b6 17.c6 ♘c5 18.♘d4 ♗e8 19.♗d3 ♘xd3+ 20.♖xd3 ♗e4 21.♗g3 ♗a7 22.0-0 and it's hard for Black to defend, Macieja-M. Socko, Warsaw 2010.

17. ♖c3xc5 ♗c8-f5!

An important improvement! Literally a few days previously a game had been played where this novelty was first demonstrated: 17...♗e6 18.♖d4 (it was worth considering 18.♖c3 ♗ac8 19.♖a1) 18...♖xa3 19.♗e2 ♖c1+ 20.♖d1 ♖b2 (more sensible is 20...♖c3+ 21.♖d2 ♖a1+ 22.♖d1 ♖c3+ with a draw) 21.0-0 and White ultimately won, Lahno-T. Kosintseva, Cap d' Agde 2010.

18. ♖c5-d4

The point of Black's last move becomes clear in the line 18.♖c1 ♗ac8 19.♖a1 ♗c2 20.♘d4 (with the black bishop on e6 this was impossible due to 20.♗d3) 20...♗fc8! 21.♘xc2 ♗xc2 22.♗g3 d4! (22...♖b3 23.♗e5) 23.exd4 ♖b3 24.♗e2 ♗d3 (24...♗b2!? 25.0-0 ♗xe2) 25.0-0 ♗xe2 and White has a tricky defence ahead.

18. ... ♖a4xa3  
19. ♗f1-e2 ♖a3-b4+!

Black is no longer satisfied with the draw arising after 19...♖c1+ 20.♖d1 ♖c3+ 21.♖d2 ♖a1+ 22.♖d1 ♖c3+.

20. ♖d4xb4

20. ♖d2 ♗fc8.

20. ... a5xb4  
21. ♘f3-d4 ♗a8-a1+!

Also not bad is 21...♗fc8 22.♗d1 (White can't escape the difficulties with 22.0-0 ♗c2! 23.♘xc2 ♗xc2 24.♗d3 ♗d2 25.♗b1 b3 26.♗e7 ♗a4!) 22...♗h7 – more accurate than 22...♗g6 23.f4 but the move in the game is even stronger.

22. ♗e2-d1



22. ... ♗f5-h7?

As Kramnik admitted after the game, he'd mixed up two winning ideas. The cocktail was a failure. In the given situation he should have played 22...♗fa8! 23.♗g3 (23.♘xf5 b3 24.♘h6+ ♗f8) 23...♗d3 24.♗d2 ♗c4 and it's hard to give White any good advice.

23. ♘d4-b3 ♗a1-b1  
24. ♘b3-d2 ♗b1-b2

24...♗c1 25.♘b3.

25. ♖h4-g3 ♜f8-c8  
26. ♗g3-e5 ♜b2-a2  
27. ♜d2-b3 ♗h7-c2  
28. ♗d1xc2 ♜c8xc2  
29. 0-0 f7-f6  
30. ♗e5-d4 ♜a2-a3  
31. ♜b3-a1!

The most accurate move! Amazingly  
White holds.

31. ... ♖c2-d2  
32. h2-h3 ♖a3-d3  
33. ♔g1-h2! ♖d3-a3

After 33...♖d1 34.♗xd1 ♕xd1 35.♕b3 only Black is risking losing, for example: 35...♗b1 36.♕c5 b3 37.♕xb7 b2 38.♔g3.



34. b5-b6                      h6-h5  
35. ♖f1-b1                    ♘d2xf2  
36. ♜a1-b3                    ♚a3-a2  
37. ♚b1-g1                   ♙g8-h7  
38. ♜b3-c5



- 38. ... ♖f2-d2??**

Trying in vain to win, Black loses control of the position. A draw could have been achieved quite easily: 38...♖ad2! 39.♟xb7 b3 40.♟a5 b2 41.b7 ♖xg2+ (41...b1♚ 42.♖xb1 ♖xg2+) 42.♖xg2 ♖xg2+ 43.♟xg2 b1♚ 44.♟a7.

- 39. c5xb7 b4-b3**

40. b7-c5      b3-b2  
41. g1-b1!      1-0

Kramnik's preparation was flawless: an accurate choice of opening, a wonderful knowledge of the modern state of theory in the line and finally, a serious improvement fundamentally altering the evaluation of the position. Meanwhile, Aronian proved to be unprepared for the variation that arose in the game, admitting his preparation dated from 2005. The objective evaluation of the position was also discouraging for him.

Would it be correct, however, to explain the unexpected result of the game simply by proverbial luck? After all, it's not the first time Kramnik's suffered from such forgetfulness, and Aronian gets away with things time and again. I think the explanation for the phenomenon is more profound. Vladimir prefers to stake everything on home preparation, entrusting the MF not only with a careful investigation of all the details, but also with remembering the numerous nuances and sub-variations. The direct preparation for a game often comes down to many hours of revising and rote learning. At times he lacks the freshness or energy for his own play. Sometimes his memory lets him down. Levon, on the other hand, sacrifices depth in his home analysis but maintains his taste for the struggle and often finds stunning resources at the board.

There's also another trend in modern chess – the demise of particular variations. In the Candidates' Matches in Kazan the grandmasters playing Black would frequently make easy draws in positions that on the surface looked extremely dangerous. Moreover, all their

efforts at the board came down to not forgetting or mixing up the variations honed by their coaching teams. All that was left for the players to do was come to terms with the flawless home analysis.

[D56]

Game 64

**Teimour Radjabov**  
**Vladimir Kramnik**

Kazan m 2011 (1.3)

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4   | ♘g8-f6 |
| 2. c2-c4   | e7-e6  |
| 3. ♖g1-f3  | d7-d5  |
| 4. ♖b1-c3  | ♙f8-e7 |
| 5. ♙c1-g5  | h7-h6  |
| 6. ♙g5-h4  | 0-0    |
| 7. e2-e3   | ♘f6-e4 |
| 8. ♙h4xe7  | ♚d8xe7 |
| 9. ♖a1-c1  | c7-c6  |
| 10. ♙f1-d3 | ♘e4xc3 |
| 11. ♖c1xc3 | d5xc4  |
| 12. ♙d3xc4 | ♘b8-d7 |
| 13. ♚d1-c2 | b7-b6  |
| 14. ♙c4-d3 |        |



14. ... ♘d7-f6!?

Much more frequently played is 14...c5 15.♙h7+ (15.♙e4) 15...♚h8 16.♙e4 ♖b8 17.0-0 a5, Van Wely-Volokitin, Foros 2008. The position is close to equal, but Black still has to prove that with accurate play. In the game men-

tioned, for instance, he didn't manage. Kramnik chooses a more accurate continuation, the aim of which is to achieve a draw in a more forceful manner.

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 15. ♖c3xc6 | ♘f6-d5  |
| 16. ♚c2-b3 | ♘d5-b4  |
| 17. ♖c6-c1 | ♘b4xd3+ |
| 18. ♚b3xd3 | ♙c8-b7  |
| 19. 0-0    | ♙b7xf3  |
| 20. g2xf3  | ♚e7-g5+ |
| 21. ♚g1-h1 |         |

In the only previous game where 14...♘f6 occurred, Van Wely-Kasimdzhanov, Khanty-Mansiysk Olympiad 2010, a draw was agreed here. While preparing, however, Radjabov had doubts about Black's position.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 21. ...    | ♚g5-d5 |
| 22. ♚d3-e4 | ♚d5xa2 |
| 23. ♖f1-g1 |        |



The first impression is that it's not easy for Black to defend. That was probably how Radjabov evaluated the position as well.

23. ... ♖f8-c8!

Kramnik's by no means obvious reply (and especially the speed with which it was played) demonstrated that such a course of events didn't come as a sur-



prise to him. The move in the game is, without doubt, the most accurate.

A) 23...♖ac8?? loses immediately:  
24.♙xg7+ ♖xg7 25.♙g1+ ♖h8  
26.♚e5+f6 27.♚h5;

B) 23...♚d5?! 24.♚xd5 exd5 25.♖c7  
leads to an unpleasant rook ending.

**24. ♚e4-b7 ♖c8-f8!**

This looks extremely unaesthetic, but the MF doesn't recognise such categories. Moreover, the move is almost forced.

<b>25. ♖c1-c7</b>	<b>♚a2xb2</b>
<b>26. ♖c7xf7</b>	<b>♖f8xf7</b>
<b>27. ♚b7xa8+</b>	<b>♖g8-h7</b>
<b>28. ♚a8-e8</b>	<b>♖f7-c7</b>
<b>29. ♚e8xe6</b>	<b>♚b2xf2</b>
<b>30. ♚e6-e4+</b>	<b>♖h7-g8</b>



**31. ♚e4-e8+**

Both here and on move 33 White had a less than obvious chance to continue the struggle: 31.h3!. This is what Kramnik pointed out after the game, and that corresponds fully with the opinion of the MF. However, the outcome of the game probably wouldn't have been changed as Black most likely also knew how to continue the variation: 31...♚c2 32.♚e8+ ♖h7 33.d5 ♚f5 34.♚e4 ♚xe4 35.fxe4 ♖e7! and the rook ending holds.

<b>31. ...</b>	<b>♖g8-h7</b>
<b>32. ♚e8-e4+</b>	<b>♖h7-g8</b>
<b>33. ♚e4-e8+</b>	<b>1/2-1/2</b>

In another match it was only at the second attempt that Black managed to demonstrate forced equality.

[D80]

**Boris Gelfand**  
**Gata Kamsky**

Kazan m 2011 (2.4)

Game 65

<b>1. d2-d4</b>	<b>♖g8-f6</b>
<b>2. c2-c4</b>	<b>g7-g6</b>
<b>3. ♖b1-c3</b>	<b>d7-d5</b>
<b>4. ♖c1-g5</b>	<b>♖f6-e4</b>
<b>5. ♖g5-h4</b>	<b>♖e4xc3</b>
<b>6. b2xc3</b>	<b>d5xc4</b>
<b>7. e2-e3</b>	<b>♖c8-e6</b>
<b>8. ♖g1-f3</b>	<b>c7-c5</b>
<b>9. ♖f1-e2</b>	<b>♖f8-g7</b>
<b>10. 0-0</b>	<b>0-0</b>
<b>11. ♖a1-b1</b>	



**11. ... c5xd4!**

This far from obvious move is a product of Kamsky's laboratory. Perfectly possible is 11...b6!? 12.♚c2 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♖d7 14.♖g5 ♖d5 15.e4 ♖b7 16.♖xc4 h6 17.♖f3 ♖c8 which was seen in Gupta-Areschenko, New Delhi 2011. Much weaker is 11...♖d5?! 12.♚c2 cxd4?! (12...f5) 13.cxd4 b6 14.♖xc4

♟c6 15.♞fc1 ♟xc4 16.♞xc4 ♟a5 17.♞c7 with a big edge for White, as occurred in the second game of the match. Kamsky, having forgotten his analysis, mixed up the move order and only survived by a miracle. That's not such an unusual story in modern computer chess. Luckily, his opponent gave him the opportunity to demonstrate the right path.

## 12. ♟f3xd4

12.cxd4 ♞d7 13.♟g5 ♟d5 14.e4 ♟c6 promises White nothing.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 12. ...    | ♟e6-d5 |
| 13. ♞d1-c2 | ♞d8-d7 |
| 14. ♞f1-d1 |        |



It looks promising to play 14.e4!? ♟c6 15.♟xc4 but in that case as well Black resolves all his problems with the help of the less than obvious exchange 15...♟xd4! 16.cxd4 ♞xd4 17.♞bd1 ♞e5 18.f4 ♞c5+ 19.♟h1 ♟a6.

## 14. ... ♟g7xd4!

A very concrete and extremely unconventional solution to the position! For a 'Grünfelder' it's extremely tough to sacrifice the trademark bishop, but the MF has neither tastes nor sympathies. The move in the game is the program's clear first line.

## 15. c3xd4

No advantage is promised by the line 15.♞xd4 ♟c6 16.♞d2 ♞e6 17.♞d1 ♟e4 18.♞xb7 ♞ab8 19.♞dd7 ♞xb7 20.♞xb7 ♞d8 but the computer's 15.e4!? is very interesting.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 15. ...    | ♞d7-e6 |
| 16. ♟e2-f3 |        |

The best move. Now Black manages to demonstrate the main variation of his deep home preparation.

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 16. ...   | ♟d5xf3 |
| 17. g2xf3 | ♟b8-d7 |

After 17...♞d5 18.♞e4! ♞xe4 19.fxe4 b6 20.♞dc1 White would have kept the initiative.

## 18. ♞c2-e4

Black would also have retained sufficient counterplay after 18.♞xb7 ♞fb8 19.♞db1 ♞xb7 20.♞xb7 ♞c8 21.♞xa7 c3.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 18. ...    | b7-b6  |
| 19. ♞d1-c1 | ♞a8-c8 |

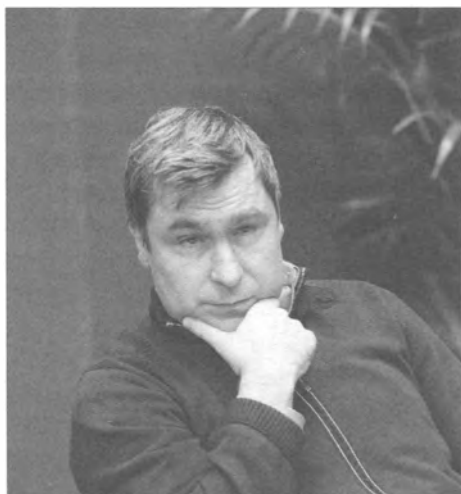
Another option was 19...♞xe4 20.fxe4 ♞fc8 21.♞b4 ♟f8 22.♞bxc4 ♞xc4 23.♞xc4 ♟e8 with equality.

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 20. ♞b1-b4 | c4-c3   |
| 21. ♞b4-b3 | ♟d7-f6  |
| 22. ♞e4xe6 | f7xe6   |
| 23. ♟h4xf6 | 1/2-1/2 |

The simplest approach for Black now is 23...exf6 24.♞bxc3 ♞xc3 25.♞xc3 ♞f7, and Black holds the endgame easily. Kamsky spent only a few minutes on the whole game, which can be considered some kind of compensation for his suffering in the previous encounter as Black.

If we talk about a harmony between the ideas of the player himself and their computer verification, then the closest to attaining that among the modern elite is Vasily Ivanchuk. He's helped by his constant work on chess and his unique opening erudition. In recent years he also hasn't disdained the help of the MF, but he doesn't have excessive trust in its evaluations.

The game he played in Khanty-



**Vasily Ivanchuk**

Mansiysk against Baadur Jobava is so unusual that it's hard to prove or disprove any conclusions about it. The story that preceded it, however, is a very good illustration of Vasily's approach to opening preparation. Ivanchuk first played 3.f3 in the Caro-Kann Defence against Grandmaster Mchedlishvili. Noting that Georgian chess players usually choose 3...♖b6 in this variation he prepared a novelty. On that occasion he didn't manage to test out his home preparation as the game followed a different route. Ian Nepomniachtchi was luckier, as independently of Ivanchuk

he hit upon the very same idea and used it to beat Jobava. However, Nepomniachtchi lost the next opening duel in that line... to Ivanchuk. And then there was another test.

**[B12]**

Game 66

**Vasily Ivanchuk**

**Baadur Jobava**

Khanty-Mansiysk Olympiad 2010 (7)

- |           |              |               |
|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>e2-e4</b> | <b>c7-c6</b>  |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>d2-d4</b> | <b>d7-d5</b>  |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>f2-f3</b> | <b>♖d8-b6</b> |



Jobava picks up the gauntlet. In the game mentioned Mchedlishvili chose 3...e6 4.♘c3 ♙b4 5.♘e2 dxe4 6.a3 ♙a5 7.fxe4 e5!? with complex play, Ivanchuk-Mchedlishvili, Greece 2009.

### 4. a2-a3!?

Yet another novelty, prepared specifically for this game. 4.a4!? e6!? (4...e5!? 5.dxe5?! dxe4 6.a5 ♖c7 7.f4 ♘h6 8.♘c3 ♙b4 9.♙d2 e3?! 10.♙xe3 0-0 11.♘f3 favours White, Nepomniachtchi-Jobava, Rijeka European Championship 2010) 5.c3 c5!? 6.exd5 exd5 7.♙b5+ ♙d7 8.♖e2+ ♙e7 9.dxc5 ♖xc5 10.b3 a6 11.♙xd7+ ♘xd7 12.♘h3 0-0-0 was played in Nepomniachtchi-Ivanchuk, Havana Capablanca Memorial 2010. The ensuing double-

edged position is very hard to evaluate. Ivanchuk's finds have essentially opened up a new page for this variation.

4. ... e7-e5

Black has an enormous choice, but such a reaction was possible to predict – this was how Jobava also played against Nepomniachtchi.

5. e4xd5 ♘g8-f6!?

Worth considering was 5...cxd5 6.♘c3 exd4 7.♘b5 (7.♘xd5? ♚a5+) 7...a6 8.♘xd4 (8.♚xd4? ♚e6+) 8...♘f6.

6. d4xe5



6. ... ♖f8-c5!?

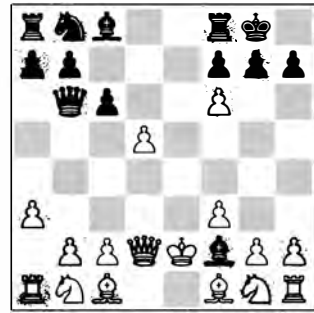
A surprise! On 6...♘xd5 Ivanchuk was intending 7.♘d2! ♘e3 8.♘c4 ♘xc4 9.♙xc4 ♙c5 10.♘e2.

7. e5xf6 ♙c5-f2+

An amazing position! Out of the first eight moves White has made seven of them with pawns and one with his king. And playing like this was far from a beginner but one of the world's best players. Such free-ranging creativity is the trademark of the Ukrainian grandmaster.

8. ♔e1-e2 0-0

9. ♚d1-d2



An only move. White's position looks very dangerous, so offering a draw was perfectly understandable in human terms. The imperturbable MF, however, isn't afraid of ghosts and rates the material advantage higher.

9. ... ♗f8-e8+

The decision to fight on, and the move in the game, didn't take Baadur much time. The MF considers the best move to be 9...♙xg1 10.♙d1 ♙d4 (10...♙f5 11.g4 ♙g6 12.h4) 11.fxg7 ♙xg7 12.♘c3 ♘d7 where the compensation, in its opinion, is insufficient for the sacrificed material. That evaluation in no way simplifies White's task in such a totally non-standard position.

10. ♙e2-d1 ♗e8-e1+?!

Jobava also took this highly critical decision amazingly quickly. The more natural 10...♙xg1 was best from a practical point of view. For example: 11.♙d3 ♘d7 12.fxg7 ♘f6 and in the ensuing mind-boggling position any outcome is possible.

11. ♚d2xe1 ♙f2xe1  
12. ♙d1xe1 ♙c8-f5  
13. ♙f1-e2!? ♘b8-d7?!

Black plays to develop as quickly as possible. Again more practical was 13...cxd5 or 13...♙xc2.

**14. d5xc6      b7xc6?!**

14... ♖xc6 15. ♘c3 ♘xf6 is preferable.

**15. ♙e2-d1!**

Now White has an enormous material edge. Moreover, it's become much simpler for him to play.

**15. ...      ♖a8-e8+**

**16. ♘g1-e2      ♘d7xf6**

**17. ♘b1-c3**



**17. ...      ♙f5-c8?!**

Black's desire to retain as many pieces on the board as possible is understandable, nevertheless 17... ♘d5! 18. ♘xd5 cxd5 would have been a better choice.

**18. a3-a4!      a7-a5**

**19. ♖h1-f1**

White's plan is simple: defend everything, and then switch to converting the significant material advantage. Black has no real counterplay. The immediate 19. ♖a3 was also good.

**19. ...      ♙c8-a6**

**20. ♖f1-f2      h7-h5**

**21. ♖a1-a3!      h5-h4**

**22. g2-g3      h4-h3**

**23. g3-g4      ♖e8-d8**

**24. ♘e2-f4      ♘f6-d7**

**25. ♖a3-b3      ♖b6-d4**

**26. ♘f4-e2      ♖d8-e8**

**27. ♘c3-e4!      ♖d4xa4**

**28. ♙c1-d2**

At the cost of a pawn White has fully coordinated his numerous pieces. The fate of the game is a foregone conclusion.

**28. ...      ♖a4-a1**

**29. ♙d2-c3      ♘d7-e5**

The attempt to create at least some sort of counterplay only accelerates the end. However, there was no longer any way of surviving.

**30. ♖b3-a3      ♖a1-b1**

**31. ♘e4-d2      ♖b1-c1**

**32. ♖a3xa5      ♘e5-g6**

**33. ♖a5xa6      ♘g6-f4**

**34. ♖a6-a8!      1-0**

What contribution did the computer – no, not revolution – evolution make to chess?

Play became more concrete. Strategy, in the sense that Botvinnik invested in that concept, has disappeared. It's hard to find a game at top grandmaster level where one of the players steadily and triumphantly follows a single line from the opening to the endgame. Much, if not everything, is decided by small details, nuances, which sometimes are imperceptible to the human eye but don't escape the attention of the vigilant MF. General positional principles haven't, of course, been overturned, but they've ceased to play their previous decisive role. The significance of tactics has, on the contrary, grown significantly. It's not that the attacking style has

finally proved its effectiveness in modern chess, but rather that the whole concept of style is gradually disappearing, to be replaced by a general and all-encompassing universality. The all-seeing MF finds tactical motifs in positions where people previously limited themselves to general considerations. Under the influence of the constantly improving programs people have also begun to change. The result is that chess has become more dynamic and more tense than before.

As for the opening, where the influence and significance of the MF is particularly great, the role of the human is more and more coming down to that of a customer in an enormous shop. The obliging database offers various options from the few million games it has in stock, and the constantly improving programs allocate prices to the goods on display. The difference between that and a real market is that trademark goods from the best manufacturers are now affordable for all buyers. Anyone can become an expert on opening theory if he's got sufficient skill, desire and free time. At grandmaster level, however, it's not the beautiful and high quality products given as the MF's first lines that are valued. Like antique dealers, serious professionals scour scruffy flea markets in search of hidden treasures. Finding an idea that appeals to them somewhere on the tenth line they wash off the mud at home and polish it, after which its value increases many times over.

So in the near future a luxury product – objectively the best continuations – will be little in demand. Everyone in the know will be aware of it, but it'll only come into play against less skilful players, or in situations where the quality of the moves is more important than the result.

Studying, seeking, screening and honing opening variations demands great time and effort from a modern grandmaster. The relationship between the energy spent on preparation and on actual play has decisively shifted in favour of preparation. While in the past the opening and the work connected with it was only an introduction, an overture to the real action, now independent play, improvisation and original ideas are often looked upon as an unfortunate omission in home preparation. A professional often sits down at the board tired and over-wrought, with energy levels that barely suffice to remember and reproduce the complex computer analysis.

There's another danger lurking in wait for a modern chess player. The ease with which you receive correct responses from the all-knowing prompter gives rise to the illusion of simplicity. In pre-computer times each new idea, each piece of quality analysis, required a lot of time and effort. The process was no less valuable than the result. On the path to truth the investigator would learn many new things and even if the result of one particular search was negative, the effort wasn't spent in vain. Nowadays an unexpected deviation at the board from the route marked out at home can sometimes provoke something close to shock, as the moves played were linked not by the player's logic and understanding but by the opinion and will of

the machine. As a result, there's a growing gulf between the quality of the almost flawless openings, satisfactory middlegames and often disastrous endgames. At the current stage in the development of chess it's not even a question of an absolute harmony between all those components, but about some kind of half-reasonable proportions. This is also an area where there's great hidden potential for improvement, and young chess players who grasp these modern trends will find it significantly easier to achieve a new level of mastery.

# Analyse your own games – without a computer

## Epilogue to Chapter 2

The problems encountered by a modern chess professional demand full time commitment, leaving no time or emotional energy for any other activities. What should you do if you're an amateur who's able to devote a maximum of ten hours a week to his favourite game!? Read the last chapter carefully and... immediately forget about it. A person who hasn't fully devoted himself to chess simply can't allow himself to get involved in chasing after a phantom. The constantly improving programs create the illusion that truth, or in any case its chess component, is attainable. Victims of this faith, an unusual new religion, even include grandmasters, who spend ever more time in front of a glowing screen. The desire to bring analysis to a final outcome is, of course, admirable, but the truth more often than not escapes even those enthusiasts.

So what should a poor amateur do, tempted by the same temptation but without the same potential? Don't succumb to the sweet singing of the sirens and keep as far away as possible from the whirlpool of elusive truth!

The only way to maintain your pleasure from the game and at the same time be capable of improving is to reduce your dialogue with the machine to a minimum. Time spent with the machine will inevitably lead to complete dependence on the MF, which is fraught with the risk of total creative impotence. Working in the old way – with a book – is, as mentioned in the previous afterword, immeasurably more helpful. And the most effective path, which is also the ancient recipe of Botvinnik, is to analyse your own games. That should be done slowly, as self-critically as possible, and without any prompts or peeping. Only at the final stage, when you've already decided where to place the emphasis and drawn your own conclusions, is there any point in switching on the ruthless editor – the notorious MF. Like a spotlight it will highlight your errors and thereby indicate areas where you can improve. Any other kind of communication with the MF would best be avoided. It's particularly dangerous to use it to watch games on-line. Such cooperation can only lead to a false impression of your own chess strength. In general, while at grandmaster level it's perfectly admissible (and sometimes even useful) to make your own re-evaluation, at amateur level it usually brings nothing but trouble.

As for theoretical preparation, it's best to stick to a simple rule: the less you play, the narrower your opening repertoire. Such self-limitation, together with the analysis



of your own games mentioned above, will enable you to acquire a deeper understanding of the variations you play, or to get into the spirit of them, to put it more grandly. With such an approach before an upcoming encounter you need only refresh your memory about the variations and recent games played in them.

Of course, you can also adopt the diametrically opposite method: have as wide an opening range as possible. The decision on how to play the game is taken at the board depending on your mood. Such an approach demands almost no preparation, as everything is kept impromptu, based on improvisation. Your opponent will also be forced to take independent decisions from the very first moves – pure creativity! True, for such an approach books like this one can only be harmful.

## Chapter 3 – Deciding Games

It's undeniably of great importance for a modern professional to be theoretically equipped. The ability simply to play chess is also something no-one's yet found a way around, even if nowadays people don't always get as far as playing on their own. Health and mental resilience play a significant role. However, in the career of any chess player situations inevitably arise when the outcome of a tournament, match or even a whole life depends on a single game.

The ability to mobilise your best qualities at that culminating moment, to demonstrate all your mastery, is always something that's distinguished the great chess players. Of course, it's a gift that's often been granted by nature in addition to pure chess talent. However, history also provides examples of people who would previously fold in critical moments turning into die-hard fighters – it's enough to remember Polugaevsky and Spassky. On the other hand, it was precisely the failures of Geller and Keres in the most important games that prevented them from taking the last step to the top. It's possible, and indeed necessary, to work on training your sporting character in order to prepare yourself for the inevitable trials that lie ahead. It's a crucial component of the preparation of any chess player.

The classic and most striking example of a confrontation is a match. Everything's clear and simple: victory for one player means defeat for the other, while your mistake will inevitably lead to your opponent's triumph. The mental stress experienced by a player in such situations is strictly individual, and it's hard to objectively assess it from the outside. It depends, of course, on the importance of the event, the strength of the opponent and the temperament of the player himself, but in any case it's at a level many times above that of a normal game. Garry Kasparov, who's won many crucial battles in his lifetime, gave eloquent testimony: 'Such encounters, of incomparable significance in the life of a chess player, have their own laws of combat. When just a single move can decide the question of 'to be or not to be', it's very hard to maintain perfect clarity of thought. It's impossible to escape the thought that one wrong move might prove fateful, as afterwards it'll be impossible to correct – it's the final game of the match!'

It's in deciding match encounters that the drama of the situation is manifested most clearly: everything depends on a player's mastery, mental stability and composure. The following examples convey, better than any words, how uncompromising and stressful such duels can be.

The situation that arose in the final game of the Keres-Spassky Candidates' Match is among the most typical: the wielder of the white pieces had to win, while his opponent would be perfectly satisfied with a draw. The strategies White chooses in

such circumstances differ drastically – from outright aggression from the very first moves to calm, emphatically unhurried play. In terms of historical parallels the first option was chosen by Karpov against Kasparov in the final game of the 1985 match, while the second was preferred by Kasparov in 1987. Both encounters were analysed in detail by Kasparov in his *My Great Predecessors*, and there's nothing I can add to his commentary.

Keres' aggressive mood was quite predictable. Bronstein once eloquently described his character: 'Keres loves and knows how to play while going all-in, particularly in the closing stages of an event if the final outcome depends on it... For Keres the word 'tournament' probably evokes images of chivalrous knights rushing at each other with jousts atilt, while draw offers are out of the question'. Black, as a rule, chooses solidity as his motto. A chess player who's happy with a draw usually plays 'second fiddle': a solid opening, safe play without any particular frills and no extravagant ideas or unclear sacrifices. He switches to counterattack only as a matter of absolute necessity or in the complete absence of risk. Spassky, however, decided to do the opposite.

[A68]

**Paul Keres**

**Boris Spassky**

Riga m 1965 (10)

Game 68

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| <b>1. d2-d4</b> | <b>♘g8-f6</b>  |
| <b>2. c2-c4</b> | <b>g7-g6!?</b> |

The first surprise! The King's Indian Defence has never been renowned as a fireproof opening, and moreover it was a rare guest in Spassky's repertoire. How can such a choice be explained? Firstly, by an elementary lack of match experience – a Spassky who'd already gone through two Candidates' cycles would never have embarked on such an adventure. Secondly, he'd lost the last game with black playing the Nimzo-Indian Defence. Hours of analysis and searching for improvements... Why not just launch the game on an unexpected track right from the outset? And lastly, the main thing – such play corresponded best to the inner state of the young chess player. Of course, he was

taking a risk, but at the same time he was aware that in any complications he would be happy with one outcome more than his opponent – no small advantage in a sharp struggle.

- |                  |               |
|------------------|---------------|
| <b>3. ♘b1-c3</b> | <b>♙f8-g7</b> |
| <b>4. e2-e4</b>  | <b>d7-d6</b>  |
| <b>5. f2-f4</b>  |               |

White's choice, on the contrary, was entirely predictable. Keres had played like this more than once before, while the match situation didn't leave him any particular choice.

- |                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| <b>5. ...</b>    | <b>c7-c5</b>   |
| <b>6. d4-d5</b>  | <b>0-0</b>     |
| <b>7. ♘g1-f3</b> | <b>e7-e6</b>   |
| <b>8. ♙f1-e2</b> | <b>e6xd5</b>   |
| <b>9. c4xd5</b>  | <b>b7-b5!?</b> |

And once again, the sharpest of all possible continuations. It seems as though by some unspoken arrangement the players had abandoned all the usual weapons for a deciding encounter, leav-

ing only an uncompromising street brawl!

10. e4-e5                      d6xe5  
11. f4xe5                      ♖f6-g4



The most principled continuation in this position was undoubtedly 12.♙g5. Either Keres doubted its strength or, and in my view this is more likely, he was simply striving to get away from theory as soon as possible.

12. ♙c1-f4!?

At the time this was a novelty.

12. ...                      ♖b8-d7  
13. e5-e6!

White hadn't thrown caution to the wind in order now to switch to a positional track with something like 13.♙xb5 ♖dxe5 14.0-0.

13. ...                      f7xe6

Also not bad for Black is 13...♖b6!? 14.♙g5 (14.h3 fxe6 15.♙g5 ♙f6 and 14.0-0 fxe6 15.♙g5 ♙f6 16.♙xf6 ♗xf6 are also safe for Black) 14...♙f6 or 14...♙xc3+ 15.bxc3 f6.

14. d5xe6                      ♗f8xf4  
15. ♗d1-d5!                      ♖g8-h8!?

You get the impression a draw doesn't suit Spassky either! Black sacrifices the

exchange and goes for very unclear complications, although he had a much calmer and safer continuation: 15...♙b7! 16.♗xb7 ♖b6 with roughly equal chances. It seems as though having taken the decision before the game to go for a fight the future World Champion didn't even think about compromising...

16. ♗d5xa8                      ♖d7-b6  
17. ♗a8xa7                      ♙c8xe6



18. 0-0

18.♙d1!? ♙d4 19.♖xb5 ♖e3 20.♖bxd4 ♖xg2+? 21.♗f2 ♗h4+ 22.♗g1 was seen in the game Pelikan-Quinteros, Buenos Aires 1966. Black was busted. Better is 20...cxd4! 21.♗f2, and now not 21...♖xd1+ 22.♙xd1 with an obvious edge for White, but 21...♙g4! maintaining the tension.

18. ...                      ♖g4-e3

In case of 18...♙d4+!? White would have to play 19.♗h1 (19.♖xd4 ♗xd4+ 20.♗h1 ♗xf1+ 21.♗xf1 ♖f2+ 22.♗xf2 ♗xf2 23.h3 ♖a4!? leads to equality, which White couldn't allow) and Black would simply be obliged to find the far from obvious 19...♙xc3! as otherwise he'd be clearly worse 20.bxc3 ♗d6! and an approximate variation is: 21.♙ad1 ♙d5 22.g3 ♗xf3

23. ♖xf3 ♜f2+ 24. ♔g1 ♜xd1  
25. ♙xd1 ♙xf3 26. ♙xf3=.

### 19. ♖f1-f2

Given the match situation this was the correct choice – White pins his hopes on his material advantage. It would have simplified Black's task to play 19. ♖ad1 ♜xd1 20. ♖xd1 ♙d4+ 21. ♔h1 b4 though it was worth considering 19. ♙xb5!? ♖f7 20. ♗a5 ♜xf1 21. ♖d1 ♗b8 22. ♙xf1 with slightly better chances.

### 19. ... b5-b4



### 20. ♜c3-b5?!

And again, perfectly understandable activity. However, the b2-pawn is now left undefended. He should have played 20. ♜d1! with complex play. For example: 20... ♖f7 21. ♗a5 ♜g4 22. ♗xc5 ♜xf2 23. ♜xf2 ♙xb2 24. ♖d1 ♗c7 25. ♗xb4 ♙f6 and everything's still to play for.

### 20. ... ♖f4-f7 21. ♗a7-a5 ♗d8-b8!?

Stunning! Black continues to play for an attack, although he had the simple and good continuation 21... ♙xb2.

### 22. ♖a1-e1 ♙e6-d5!?

There were also other good moves, for example: 22... ♜g4 23. ♙f1 (23. ♖ff1 ♖xf3) 23... ♜c4 24. ♗a6 ♙d5.

### 23. ♙e2-f1

After 23. ♙d3 even 23... ♜bc4 is fine.

### 23. ... ♜e3xf1! 24. ♖f2xf1?!

Of course even a super-grandmaster, especially in serious time trouble, can fail to find the best defence of 24. b3!, taking control of the c4-square. However, in this case only the outcome of the game might have been altered, not that of the match, as in the forced line 24... ♜xh2 25. ♜xh2 ♖xf2 26. ♔xf2 ♗xh2 27. ♖e8+ ♙f8 28. ♖xf8+ ♔g7 Black runs no risk of losing.

### 24. ... ♜b6-c4 25. ♗a5-a6 ♖f7-f6 26. ♗a6-a4 ♜c4xb2 27. ♗a4-c2?

After the only move 27. ♗a5! the goal isn't achieved by 27... ♜c4? 28. ♗c7. The best move for Black is 28... ♖f7, although 28... ♜d3 isn't bad either. White would still have had a bad position in terrible time trouble but the game would have continued. Now it's all over.

### 27. ... ♗b8xb5 28. ♖e1-e7 ♜b2-d3 29. ♗c2-e2 c5-c4 30. ♖e7-e8+ ♖f6-f8 31. ♖e8xf8+ ♙g7xf8 32. ♜f3-g5 ♙f8-c5+ 33. ♔g1-h1 ♗b5-d7 34. ♗e2-d2 ♗d7-e7 35. ♜g5-f3 ♗e7-e3 0-1

The always uncompromising play of Keres earned him respect, of course, but it also had a negative side. The Estonian grandmaster was let down more than once by a lack of variation in his choice

of tactics for deciding encounters, including at the most crucial moments of his brilliant career. Spassky, on the other hand, showed fantastic poise and unshakeable self-confidence in this game. It was largely those qualities that allowed him to make it through two of the toughest Candidates' cycles to reach two matches for the World Championship. I'll remind you that by winning a match against Tigran Petrosian in 1969 he became the Tenth World Chess Champion.

The following encounter took place in that same Candidates' cycle, where two recognised bullies were brought together – Mikhail Tal and Bent Larsen. In that match Tal played without his usual energy, and Larsen certainly wasn't inferior to his formidable opponent. The initiative was always on the side of the Danish player but going into the tenth and final game the score was even. And then came the moment of truth. The genius of the ex-World Champion was visible in all its glory on that day.

[B82]

Game 69

**Mikhail Tal**

**Bent Larsen**

Bled m 1965 (10)

- |              |        |
|--------------|--------|
| 1. e2-e4     | c7-c5  |
| 2. ♖g1-f3    | ♟b8-c6 |
| 3. d2-d4     | c5xd4  |
| 4. ♟f3xd4    | e7-e6  |
| 5. ♟b1-c3    | d7-d6  |
| 6. ♙c1-e3    | ♟g8-f6 |
| 7. f2-f4     | ♙f8-e7 |
| 8. ♖d1-f3    | 0-0    |
| 9. 0-0-0     | ♖d8-c7 |
| 10. ♟d4-b5?! |        |

Apparently in order to avoid 10.g4 ♟xd4 11.♙xd4 e5, but the conse-

quences of that variation seem to favour White: 12.fxe5 dxe5 13.♖g3 ♟xg4 14.♟d5 ♖d8 15.♟xe7+ ♖xe7 16.♙c3 Sax-Kasparov, Niksic 1983. With the move in the game White essentially loses a tempo.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 10. ...    | ♖c7-b8 |
| 11. g2-g4  | a7-a6  |
| 12. ♟b5-d4 | ♟c6xd4 |
| 13. ♙e3xd4 | b7-b5  |

Black also has fully-fledged play after 13...e5!? 14.g5 ♙g4 15.♖g3 exd4 16.♙xd4 (no better is 16.gxf6 dxc3 17.h3! ♙xf6 18.hxg4) 16...♙e6 17.gxf6 ♙xf6.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 14. g4-g5  | ♟f6-d7 |
| 15. ♙f1-d3 | b5-b4  |



16. ♟c3-d5!

Retreating would be unforgivable cowardice, especially as the variation 16.♟e2 e5 17.♙e3 exf4 18.♟xf4 ♟e5 promises little for White. Risk and danger were also, of course, the native element of the ex-World Champion, and created the ideal atmosphere for a deciding game.

- |           |       |
|-----------|-------|
| 16. ...   | e6xd5 |
| 17. e4xd5 |       |

This game provoked enormous interest from chess fans all around the world,

and it was also subjected to detailed analysis by several generations of investigators. Answers still haven't been received, however, to all the questions it provoked, despite the help of the diligent MF. You can only sympathise with Larsen, who was forced to take crucial decisions directly at the board. At this particular moment Black has a realistic choice of only two continuations, but calculating their consequences is beyond the capabilities not only of man, but also of machine. All that's left is to rely on intuition, but it seems that let the Dane down.



17. ...

f7-f5

The final verdict of numerous analysts, confirmed by Kasparov in his MGP: 17...g6! is stronger, and would have cast doubt on White's bold idea. The main variation looks as follows: 18.♖de1! (the most threatening move) 18...♙d8 19.♚h3 ♘e5 20.♚h6 ♙b6! 21.fxe5 ♙xd4 22.♞e4! ♙f2! 23.e6 fxe6 24.dxe6, and here both 24...♙b7 and 24...d5 lead to a tangible edge for Black. However, after 17...g6 it's worth giving serious consideration to 18.♞he1. The drawback of the move is obvious: the rook leaves the h-file. In the game it was precisely the march of the outside king's pawn supported by the rook that

decided the outcome of the game. On the other hand, the d3-bishop is defended, which is also significant in some lines. And here they are: 18...♙d8 19.♚h3 ♘e5 20.♚h6 ♙b6 21.f5!. Now:

A) It's perfectly possible to take with the piece: 21...♙xf5!? 22.♙xf5 (22.♙xe5!? dxe5 23.♙xf5 gxf5 24.♞d3 ♞a7 25.♞h3 f6 26.gxf6 f4 27.♞h5 ♘h8! 28.♞hxe5 ♞af7 29.♞e6) 22...gxf5 23.♞xe5 dxe5 (weaker is 23...♙xd4? 24.♞xd4 ♚a7 25.♞h4 f6 26.♞e1 ♞ae8 27.♞d1!±) 24.♙xb6;

B) 21...gxf5 22.♙xb6 ♘g4 23.♞g1! ♘xh6 24.gxh6+ ♘h8 25.♙d4+ f6 26.♞de1!. In the totally unique position that's arisen, where White has only a piece for the queen, it seems Black's the one who needs to seek salvation.

Without laying claim to the ultimate truth we can conclude that even after the (probably!) objectively strongest move 17...g6 the game would only just have been starting.

18. ♞d1-e1!?

Roughly equivalent to 18.♞he1!?:

A) Given the position of the white rooks 18...♞f7!? is much more appropriate than in the game. For example: 19.♙xf5 (after 19.h4 ♘f8 20.h5 the d1-rook would look much better on h1) 19...♘f8 20.♙e6! ♘xe6 21.dxe6 ♞f5 22.♙f6!! ♙xf6 23.♚e4 g6 24.gxf6 ♞xf6 25.♚d4 ♞f8 (25...♞xe6? 26.♚d5; 25...♙g7? 26.f5) 26.e7 ♞e8 27.♚d5+ ♙g7 28.♚d4+ ♘h6 29.f5 ♙xf5 30.♚h4+ ♙g7 31.♚d4+. In the skilled hands of the MF this all comes down to a draw;

B) 18...♙d8 19.♚h3 ♚c7 20.♙xf5 ♙xf5 21.♚xf5 ♘f8 22.♚e4 ♚f7 23.h4

with mutual chances. In general, all these tricks with the rooks are hard to grasp even in leisurely analysis with the help of the fearless Consultant. What can you say about the players doomed to act on intuition!?

**18. ... ♖f8-f7?**

Larsen 'didn't guess right'! In this situation he should have played 18...♙d8! when among all the numerous options the best seems to be Tal's suggestion of 19.♞h5! (no good is 19.♙xg7 ♜xg7 20.♞h5 ♜g8! 21.♙xf5 ♝f8 and Black defends) 19...♝c5 20.♙xg7! ♝xd3+ 21.♝b1! ♞c7! (21...♝xe1? 22.g6 loses quickly) 22.♙xf8 ♝xe1 23.♞xe1 ♞f7 24.♞xf7+ ♜xf7 25.♙xd6 with a roughly even ending.

**19. h2-h4!**

Precisely! It unexpectedly turns out that all White's pieces are ideally located. Much weaker is 19.♙xf5? ♝f8! and the black pieces miraculously come back to life.

**19. ... ♙c8-b7**



It seems Black's position is objectively bad. It loses, for example, to activate the knight: 19...♝c5? 20.h5 ♝xd3+ 21.♞xd3 ♙f8 22.g6 ♞c7 23.gxh7+ ♜xh7 24.♞g3!.

**20. ♙d3xf5!?**

Tal's note to this move is interesting: 'A concession to sporting calculations. If this position had occurred somewhere other than the final game I'd have played more sharply: 20.g6 hxg6 21.h5 g5 22.♙xf5! with very dangerous threats. However, I definitely wanted to capture, and I couldn't find a forced win after 22...♙f6 23.♙e6 ♞f8 (not 23...♙xd4 24.fxg5 ♞f8 25.g6) at the board, so I decided to avoid getting into time trouble by wasting time on calculating long complex variations.' As it turns out that was a wise decision. It's simply impossible to calculate everything accurately in such a complex position. For example, the final position of Tal's variation turns out to be clearly in White's favour: 24.♙xf6 g4 25.♞xg4 ♝xf6 26.♞g5 ♝h8 27.♙xf7 ♞xf7 28.h6 g6 29.f5. But in the side-line 23...♙xd4 24.fxg5 Black has the strong reply 24...♞e8! and after the forced 25.♞g4 ♝c5 26.♙xf7+ ♞xf7 27.♞xd4 ♞xd5 you get a totally unclear position. All that's left is to indicate the MF's recommendation: 20.h5! ♞f8 21.g6 ♞f6 22.gxh7+ ♜xh7 (22...♝h8 23.h6) 23.♙xf6 ♞xf6 24.♞h3 ♞f8 25.♞e6±.

**20. ... ♞f7xf5**

In case of 20...♝f8!? things are decided by 21.♙xh7+! ♜xh7 22.h5! ♙xg5 23.♞e4+ ♝g8 24.fxg5 with a winning attack.

**21. ♞e1xe7 ♝d7-e5!  
22. ♞f3-e4 ♞b8-f8**

The only move. Bad is 22...♞f7? 23.♞xf7 ♝xf7 24.g6.



**23. f4xe5 ♖f5-f4**

23...♖xe7 24.♖xf5 ♙xd5 25.♖f1 dxe5  
26.♙xe5±.

**24. ♖e4-e3 ♖f4-f3?!**

A little more accurate is 24...♙xd5  
25.exd6 ♖xd4 26.♖xd4 ♙xh1  
27.♖xb4 ♖d8 28.b3 but it's extremely  
difficult to save this position.

**25. ♖e3-e2 ♖f8xe7**

**26. ♖e2xf3 d6xe5**

**27. ♖h1-e1 ♖a8-d8**

There was no longer any escape.  
27...♖f8 28.♖b3 ♖f7 29.♙xe5 ♖xd5  
30.♙d6 ♖xb3 31.axb3 is absolutely  
hopeless for Black.

**28. ♖e1xe5 ♖e7-d6**

**29. ♖f3-f4 ♖d8-f8**

**30. ♖f4-e4 b4-b3**

**31. a2xb3 ♖f8-f1+**

**32. ♙c1-d2 ♖d6-b4+**

**33. c2-c3 ♖b4-d6**

**34. ♙d4-c5!**

The quickest and most elegant path to  
victory.

**34. ... ♖d6xc5**

**35. ♖e5-e8+ ♖f1-f8**

**36. ♖e4-e6+ ♙g8-h8**

**37. ♖e6-f7! 1-0**

A brilliant game that's typical of the  
young Tal. What gives it rare value is  
that the piece was sacrificed at the most  
crucial moment, when the fate of the  
Candidates' Match was at stake. I'm  
convinced that if White had played  
more cautiously on move 16 the out-  
come of the encounter would have  
been different, but Tal remained true to  
himself and won!

What lesson can be drawn from such a  
wonderful game? That in such situa-  
tions you need to rush with your sword  
unsheathed and try to overwhelm the  
enemy with a furious assault? Abso-  
lutely not! First of all, it's essential to re-  
main true to yourself in such games. A  
decision that was the only correct one  
for Tal would be disastrous, for exam-  
ple, for Petrosian, and vice versa. Betray-  
ing your normal approach to the game  
almost inevitably leads to a loss.

It's enough to recall the game men-  
tioned above from the 1985 Karpov-  
Kasparov match. The World Champion,  
who needed to win at all costs, chose the  
most principled continuation in a com-  
plex position. The challenger accepted  
the challenge and a fierce struggle en-  
sued. The game was going in White's fa-  
vour, but at the critical moment Karpov's  
native caution made itself known. A  
brief delay was sufficient to concede the  
initiative, and soon also the crown. For-  
mally Karpov acted correctly, but in es-  
sence he made a decisive mistake while  
still at home in his choice of opening  
variation. Kasparov, in contrast, re-  
mained true to himself and won.

The next two deciding games were  
played in the dramatic Kortchnoi-Polu-  
gaevsky match in 1980. Going into the  
final game Polugaevsky was a point  
behind and had to win.

**[E17]**  
**Lev Polugaevsky**  
**Viktor Kortchnoi**

Buenos Aires m 1980 (12)

Game 70

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. ♘g1-f3 | ♙g8-f6 |
| 2. c2-c4  | b7-b6  |
| 3. g2-g3  | e7-e6  |
| 4. ♙f1-g2 | ♙c8-b7 |

5. 0-0 ♖f8-e7  
 6. d2-d4 0-0  
 7. d4-d5 e6xd5



8. ♖f3-h4!

Up until this game White had exclusively played 8.♖d4. Polugaevsky also played like that himself in earlier games in the match: 8.♖d4 ♖c6!? (8...♖c6!? 9.cxd5 ♖xd4 10.♖xd4 c5 was seen in Game 6) 9.cxd5 ♖xd5 10.♖xd5 ♖xd5 11.e4 ♖b4 12.♖c3 ♖f6 13.♖f5 ♖e8 (Game 8). According to Polugaevsky, after many hours of analysis he ‘managed to find a totally new path in an opening which had, it seemed, been studied inside out’. An extremely rare example of someone managing to play a novelty of this calibre in a deciding game at such a high level! True, many years later when databases appeared it emerged that the opening had been played much earlier, but that in no way lessens the researcher’s merits. He’d searched without suspecting there were any predecessors, and it was this game that sparked the enormous popularity of the whole line.

8. ... c7-c6

The source game went: 8...♖e4!? 9.cxd5 ♖d6 10.♖f3 a5 11.♖c3 f5 Guimard-Pilnik, La Plata 1944. The

move played by Kortchnoi is undoubtedly the most principled.

9. c4xd5 ♖f6xd5

9...cxd5 10.♖c3 ♖a6 11.♖f5 ♖c7 12.♖f4, with a small but stable edge for White, has been tried more than once.

10. ♖h4-f5 ♖e7-c5

Probably the critical position of the whole variation, and one which still has not lost its relevance today, arises after 10...♖c7 11.♖c3 d5 12.e4 ♖f6 13.exd5 cxd5 14.♖f4 ♖ba6. White undoubtedly has compensation for the pawn, but it’s not clear if it’s enough for an advantage.

11. e2-e4 ♖d5-e7?!

An unfortunate move connected to a tactical oversight. Subsequently Black preferred 11...♖c7, or 11...♖f6.



12. ♖f5xg7!

An unexpected strike that clearly hadn’t been foreseen by Kortchnoi. Although paradoxically Black’s position doesn’t collapse immediately, the sporting and psychological initiative had firmly switched to White, which is extremely important in such a tense and nervous situation.

12. ... ♖g8xg7  
 13. b2-b4 ♖c5xb4

After 13...♙a6!? Polugaevsky would have been faced with the difficult choice between the calm 14.♞e1 ♙xf2+ 15.♜xf2 ♘g6 and 14.bxc5 ♙xf1 15.♙xf1. In both cases White would have had sufficient compensation, but Black also has great defensive resources. The impression is that after 12.♘g7 Kortchnoi was almost knocked out and was unable to demonstrate his usual defensive ingenuity.

- |              |        |
|--------------|--------|
| 14. ♖d1-d4+  | f7-f6  |
| 15. ♖d4xb4   | c6-c5  |
| 16. ♗b4-d2   | ♘b8-c6 |
| 17. ♙c1-b2   | ♙b7-a6 |
| 18. ♞f1-d1   | ♘c6-e5 |
| 19. ♘b1-a3   | ♘e7-c6 |
| 20. ♖d2-e3!? |        |

A decision typical of Polugaevsky! Resourceful and fearless, when the situation gave him no choice he tried to delay the moment of taking a critical decision for as long as possible. The move in the game isn't bad at all, but the position was objectively ripe for more decisive actions: 20.f4!? ♘d3 21.♙c3! with the threats of 22.♙f1 and 22.e5. However, when it comes to the correct algorithm for taking decisions in such situations then it's more important to remain true to yourself than to look for absolutely the best move. In that sense it's difficult to criticise White's play.

20. ... ♖d8-e7?!

Preventing 21.♞d6. It was more stubborn, however, to play 20...♘b4 21.♞d6! ♗e7 22.♞ad1 ♞ad8 23.f4 ♘ec6.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 21. f2-f4  | ♘e5-c4 |
| 22. ♘a3xc4 | ♙a6xc4 |
| 23. e4-e5! | f6xe5  |



The position has opened up, which is clearly in White's favour. But is there a decisive continuation?

24. ♙g2xc6!

A brilliant and far from obvious decision. 24.♙xe5+ ♜g8 and 24.fxe5 ♙e6 were much weaker.

- |              |       |
|--------------|-------|
| 24. ...      | d7xc6 |
| 25. ♞d1-d7!! |       |

A brilliant finishing touch!

- |             |          |
|-------------|----------|
| 25. ...     | ♗e7xd7   |
| 26. ♗e3xe5+ | ♜g7-f7?! |

26...♜g6 27.♗g5+ ♜f7 28.♞e1 led to the position in the game.

27. ♗e5-f6+

27.♞e1! ♗e6 28.♗c7+ ♜e8 29.♗xc6+ ♜e7 30.♗b7+ wins quickly.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 27. ...     | ♜f7-g8 |
| 28. ♗f6-g5+ | ♜g8-f7 |
| 29. ♞a1-e1  | ♗d7-e6 |

29...♙e6 30.f5.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 30. ♗g5-g7+ | ♜f7-e8 |
| 31. ♞e1xe6+ | ♙c4xe6 |
| 32. ♙b2-f6  | ♙e6-f7 |
| 33. ♙f6-g5  |        |

Here it's simpler to play 33.♗xh7. The enormous tension makes itself known.

A few inaccuracies and Kortchnoi almost saves a hopelessly lost position.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 33. ...     | ♔e8-d7 |
| 34. ♖g5-h6  | c5-c4  |
| 35. ♚g7xh7  | c6-c5  |
| 36. ♖h6xf8  | ♜a8xf8 |
| 37. ♚h7-g7  | ♔d7-e7 |
| 38. ♚g7-e5+ | ♔e7-d7 |
| 39. g3-g4   |        |

39. ♚f6.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 39. ...    | ♜f8-e8 |
| 40. ♚e5-f6 | ♖f7-d5 |
| 41. g4-g5  | ♜e8-e2 |
| 42. h2-h4  |        |

Fortunately for Polugaevsky the game was adjourned and he was able to convert his slipping edge into a deserved victory.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 42. ...     | b6-b5  |
| 43. ♚f6-f5+ | ♔d7-d6 |
| 44. ♚f5-f8+ | ♔d6-c6 |
| 45. ♚f8-c8+ | ♔c6-d6 |
| 46. ♚c8-d8+ | ♔d6-c6 |
| 47. ♚d8-a8+ | ♔c6-d6 |
| 48. ♚a8-f8+ | ♔d6-c6 |



#### 49. a2-a3!

Praiseworthy composure once more. The MF doesn't fear the complications after 49.h5 b4 50. ♚a8+ ♔d6 51. ♚b8+ ♔c6 52. ♚xa7 but in such

situations human aren't up to heroic acts. The black pawns are now stalled and the win becomes a matter of time.

- |             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| 49. ...     | ♜e2-e3  |
| 50. h4-h5   | c4-c3   |
| 51. ♚f8-f6+ | ♖d5-e6  |
| 52. ♔g1-f2  | c3-c2   |
| 53. ♚f6-b2  | ♜e3-h3  |
| 54. ♔f2-g2  | ♖e6-f5  |
| 55. ♚b2-f6+ | ♔c6-c7  |
| 56. ♚f6xf5  | c2-c1 ♚ |
| 57. ♚f5-e5+ | ♔c7-b6  |
| 58. ♔g2xh3  | b5-b4   |
| 59. a3xb4   | c5xb4   |
| 60. h5-h6   | ♚c1-h1+ |
| 61. ♔h3-g4  | ♚h1-d1+ |
| 62. ♔g4-f5  | ♚d1-c2+ |
| 63. ♔f5-f6  | b4-b3   |
| 64. h6-h7   | ♚c2xh7  |
| 65. ♚e5-e3+ | ♔b6-c6  |
| 66. ♚e3xb3  | ♚h7-h8+ |
| 67. ♔f6-e7  | ♚h8-h4  |
| 68. ♚b3-c4+ | ♔c6-b6  |
| 69. ♚c4-b4+ | ♔b6-c6  |
| 70. ♚b4-e4+ | ♔c6-b5  |
| 71. ♔e7-f7  | a7-a5   |
| 72. g5-g6   | ♚h4-g4  |
| 73. ♚e4-e5+ | 1-0     |

Of course, fortune clearly smiled on Polugaevsky: finding such a powerful novelty just when it's needed isn't something that happens often. But there was a higher justice at work. A tireless worker, Lev didn't stop searching for a moment, even during matches. Moreover, Polugaevsky wasn't a born fighter. Shy, always full of doubt and indecisive by nature, it was only over the course of time that he learned not only to control his emotions, but to channel them. The mere fact that he achieved such a significant victory over his toughest opponent speaks for itself.

It seemed as though it would be hard for Kortchnoi after such a shock. Indeed, in the first tiebreak game he didn't manage to pose his opponent serious problems, while in the second game it was Polugaevsky who had White. You couldn't expect to hit the mark again, but there was also no basis for rejecting the lucky variation. It was much more difficult for Kortchnoi to decide what to do. Should he try to resist as Black and stake everything on the next game with White? Or try to seize the initiative immediately, even by taking a serious risk? You shouldn't forget that any mistake in such a tense situation could wipe out the fruits of years of efforts.

Kortchnoi's fierce character, of course, predetermined that it would be the second option. All that was needed was to find a suitable opening idea, and one was found. As Kortchnoi's spokesman at the match, Emanuel Stein, said, 'Kortchnoi and his coaches, Grandmasters Stean and Seirawan, prepared for the game all night long, honing a sharp variation of the English Opening. The variation was risky, but Kortchnoi was relying on its surprise value: if his opponent played the way he had before he was going to encounter an improvement found by Michael Stean... On the very same days the Hübner-Portisch match was taking place in Italy, and Bent Larsen was there as a correspondent for the Argentinian newspaper *Clarín*. So I went out in the morning to buy newspapers, opened *Clarín* and... I stopped dead: the whole variation was there! The whole of it! It turned out it had been played by Hübner against Portisch the day before...'

Stean's news caused real shock in the Kortchnoi camp – after all, they were

relying mainly on the surprise factor. Ultimately the decision was taken to change nothing – in the hope that the Russians wouldn't read Argentinian newspapers. In our information age that whole story looks even more amusing and implausible.

[A34]

**Lev Polugaevsky**  
**Viktor Kortchnoi**

Buenos Aires m 1980 (14)

Game 71

- |           |         |
|-----------|---------|
| 1. ♖g1-f3 | ♘g8-f6  |
| 2. c2-c4  | c7-c5   |
| 3. ♖b1-c3 | d7-d5   |
| 4. c4xd5  | ♙f6xd5  |
| 5. e2-e4  | ♘d5-b4  |
| 6. ♙f1-c4 | ♘b4-d3+ |

There was a new wave of popularity for this variation after the game Polugaevsky-Tal, Riga (Interzonal) 1979, which was won in excellent style by Black: 6...♙e6 7.♙xe6 ♘d3+ 8.♙f1 fxe6 9.♘g5 ♚b6. However 10.♚f3! (instead of 10.♚e2 c4 which was seen in that game) 10...c4 11.b3± casts doubt on Black's idea.

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 7. ♚e1-e2  | ♘d3-f4+ |
| 8. ♚e2-f1  | ♙f4-e6  |
| 9. b2-b4!? |         |

White probably can't get by without this move if he's hoping for an edge.

- |        |       |
|--------|-------|
| 9. ... | c5xb4 |
|--------|-------|

Miles came up with the interesting idea of 9...g6!? 10.bxc5 ♙g7. Here's how one of the latest games on that theme developed: 11.♙xe6 ♙xe6 12.d4 0-0 13.♙e3! f5 14.exf5 ♚xf5 (14...gxf5 15.♚e2! is worse) 15.h4!? with double-edged play, Khairullin-Naiditsch, Moscow 2006.

**10. ♖c3-d5**

Also seen was 10.♖e2 ♘c7 (10...g6 11.♙b2 ♙g7 12.♙xe6 ♙xb2 doesn't work because of 13.♙xf7+ but perfectly in the spirit of the position was the extravagant 10...g5!?) 11.d4 e6 12.h4 with compensation for the pawn, Hübner-Tukmakov, Wijk aan Zee 1984.

**10. ... g7-g6!?**

Far from the only plan, but the most logical – neutralising White's dark-squared bishop. It was this idea that almost simultaneously occurred to the coaching teams on different continents.

- |                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>11. ♙c1-b2</b> | <b>♙f8-g7</b> |
| <b>12. ♙b2xg7</b> | <b>♘e6xg7</b> |
| <b>13. ♘d5xb4</b> |               |

The most natural move, but not an obligatory one. 13.♙a4+ ♘c6 14.♘xb4 ♙d7 15.♘xc6 ♙xc6 16.♙b5 led to full equality. 13.♙c1 ♘c6 14.d4 h5 (in order to prevent ♙h6) 15.♙f4 ♘e6 16.♙e3 ♘a5 17.♙d3 ♙d6 18.g3 led to interesting and complex play in Kochiev-Tukmakov, Moscow 1983, but Black has a serious improvement: 14...♙e6! and if 15.♙h6 then 15...♘f5! and White's in trouble.

**13. ... 0-0****14. d2-d4?!**

This is also how Hübner played, but Larsen justifiably criticised this move in his newspaper commentary and suggested the prophylactic 14.h3. In my view, Stein's story overly dramatises the situation. If Polugaevsky had known about the game played the day before in Italy he'd most likely have rejected the overly optimistic 14.d4, and the main thing is that the surprise value, which Kortchnoi was relying on, would have been diminished. But in either case Black has nothing to fear! After Larsen's recommendation of 14.h3 it's not bad to play 14...e5!? 15.g3 ♙e6 16.♙c1 ♘d7 as occurred in the game Seirawan-Sax, Linares 1983, but the immediate 14...♙e6 also resolves all the problems.

- |                     |               |
|---------------------|---------------|
| <b>14. ...</b>      | <b>♙c8-g4</b> |
| <b>15. ♙f1-e2?!</b> |               |

A desperate decision! It seems emotions prevailed over common sense. Much more solid was 15.♙d2 ♙xf3 16.gxf3 ♘c6 (probably stronger is 16...a5! 17.♘c2 ♙c7) 17.♘xc6 bxc6, which occurred in the parallel game, and here 18.♙g2 rid White of serious problems.

- |                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| <b>15. ...</b>    | <b>♙d8-d6!</b> |
| <b>16. ♙d1-d2</b> | <b>♘g7-e6</b>  |
| <b>17. ♙c4xe6</b> | <b>♙d6xe6</b>  |
| <b>18. ♙e2-e3</b> |                |

'We sing the praises of the madness of the brave!' (a line from Maxim Gorky's 'Song of the Falcon' – translator's note) Such a move can only be made in the heat of passion. True, after the composed 18.♙d3 ♘d7 19.♙he1 White's position would also be worse, but resistance would remain a possibility.

**18. ... f7-f5!**

**19. ♖d2-d3**

Bad is 19.e5 f4+ 20.♗e2 ♕xf3+ 21.gxf3 ♖c4+ 22.♗e1 a5 23.♘c2 ♘c6.

Even worse is 19.♘e5? ♘d7 20.f4 (20.f3 ♘xe5 21.dxe5 ♖ad8 22.♖b2 ♖b6+ 23.♗e2 fxe4) 20...♘xe5 21.fxe5 fxe4.

**19. ... f5xe4**

**20. ♖d3xe4 ♗e6xe4+**

**21. ♖e3xe4 ♘b8-d7**



**22. ♖h1-c1**

The game has reached an ending and it seems as though White has avoided great trouble, but despite his relatively limited forces Kortchnoi manages to organise a decisive attack. The move in the game is White's first step towards the abyss, but 22.♘d5 e6 (22...♕xf3+ 23.gxf3 ♘f6+ 24.♘xf6+ ♖xf6) 23.♘f4 (or 23.♘e3 ♕xf3+ 24.gxf3 ♘f6+ 25.♗e5 ♖ad8) 23...♕xf3+ 24.gxf3 ♖f5 is no better.

**22. ... ♖f8-f5!**

**23. ♖c1-c7?**

But this is suicide! After the best 23.♘d3 ♘f6+ 24.♗e3 ♘d5+ 25.♗e4 ♕xf3+ 26.gxf3 ♖d8 you wouldn't envy White, but at least there's material

equality on the board. Now material losses are inevitable.

**23. ... ♘d7-f6+**

**24. ♗e4-d3**

24.♗e3 ♕xf3 25.gxf3 a5 is losing immediately.

**24. ... a7-a5**

**25. ♘b4-c2 ♘f6-d5**

**26. ♖c7xb7 ♘d5-f4+**

**27. ♖d3-e4 ♘f4xg2**

**28. ♘f3-e5**

28.♘fe1 ♘xe1 29.♘xe1 ♖xf2 was slightly better.

**28. ... ♖f5-f4+**

**29. ♖e4-d5**

If 29.♘d3 ♕f5+ White also loses a piece.

**29. ... ♗g4-f5!**

**30. ♖b7-c7**

The threat was 30...♕e4+.

**30. ... ♖a8-d8+**

**31. ♖d5-c5 ♗f5xc2**

**32. ♘e5-c6 ♖d8-e8**

**33. ♘c6xe7+ ♗g8-f8**

**34. ♘e7-c6 ♖f4-f5+**

**35. ♘c6-e5 ♘g2-f4**

**36. ♖c7xh7 ♗f8-g8**

**37. ♖h7-d7 ♘f4-d3+**

**38. ♖c5-b6 ♘d3xe5**

**39. d4xe5 ♖e8xe5**

**40. ♖a1-c1 ♖f5-f6+**

**41. ♖b6-a7 ♖f6xf2**

**0-1**

In this case as well, Kortchnoi's victory was entirely fair and deserved. Many people in his place would have preferred to play for equality, particularly recalling the rout in Game 12, but he set out to be the disturber of the peace and got his full reward.

Before the final game of the Jussupow-Ivanchuk Candidates' Match there was a situation we're already familiar with. Jussupow, playing White, had to win, while a draw would suit Black perfectly. Artur didn't have any productive opening ideas in reserve, so he deliberately switched the whole weight of the struggle to the middlegame.

**[E43]**

Game 72

**Artur Jussupow**  
**Vasily Ivanchuk**

Brussels m 1991 (8)

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4  | ♟g8-f6 |
| 2. c2-c4  | e7-e6  |
| 3. ♖b1-c3 |        |

Artur stays true to himself: this was how all the games he played as White in the match started. That decision is somewhat debatable, as in such situations it's preferable to pose your opponent problems as early as possible, but competing with Ivanchuk in opening erudition is a thankless task.

- |          |        |
|----------|--------|
| 3. ...   | ♙f8-b4 |
| 4. e2-e3 | b7-b6  |

Vasily is the first to deviate from the beaten path. In the second and sixth games he played 4...c5.

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 5. ♙f1-d3 | ♙c8-b7 |
| 6. ♖g1-f3 | 0-0    |
| 7. 0-0    | c7-c5  |
| 8. ♙c1-d2 |        |

The main continuation in this position is 8.♖a4.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 8. ...     | c5xd4  |
| 9. e3xd4   | d7-d5  |
| 10. c4xd5  | ♖f6xd5 |
| 11. ♖a1-c1 |        |

A new move back then, but it doesn't pose Black any particular problems. Of more interest is the attempt to hinder natural development: 11.♙e1!? in order after 11...♖c6 (11...♖d7!?) to play 12.♖xd5 ♙xd2 (12...♙xd5 13.♙e4 ♙a5 14.♙xb4 ♙xb4 15.♙c2 is weaker) 13.♙xd2 ♙xd5 14.♙e4 with a slight edge for White, although it's achieved at the cost of serious simplifications. 11.♙e2 also doesn't prevent 11...♖c6. If 11.♖e5!? then it's not bad to play 11...♖d7.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 11. ...    | ♖b8-c6 |
| 12. ♙f1-e1 |        |

As well as 12.♙c2 or 12.♙e2 it's worth considering 12.♙e4!? ♖f6 (12...f5 13.♙xd5 exd5 14.♖b5 favours White) 13.♙g5 ♙e7 14.♙b1 ♙c8 15.a3 h6 16.♙h4 with complex play.

- |         |        |
|---------|--------|
| 12. ... | ♙a8-c8 |
|---------|--------|

In a typical isolated pawn position Black places his pieces in the best manner possible. It's hard for White to engage in any kind of struggle. For example, after the standard 13.♙b1 Black simply replies 13...♖f6 with straightforward and comfortable play.

- |              |
|--------------|
| 13. ♙e1-e4!? |
|--------------|

This looks risky, but given the sporting situation it was undoubtedly the correct decision. The character of the struggle is sharply altered, which plays into White's hands.

- |         |        |
|---------|--------|
| 13. ... | ♖c6-e7 |
|---------|--------|

A good natural move that prevents the rook switching to the kingside. Also not bad with the same aim was 13...♙e7!?:

A) 14.♙g4 f5! (the most decisive move) 15.♙g3 ♙d6 16.♙g5 ♙d7



17. ♖xd5 (17. ♖h3 ♖f4) and here equally dangerous for Black are 17... ♗xg3 and also 17... exd5;

B) 14. ♖xd5 ♗xd5 15. ♖g4 ♖fd8 and Black has an excellent position.

#### 14. ♖c3xd5

The best move. After 14. ♖h4 ♖g6 White's attack is stamped out before it's even begun.

#### 14. ... ♖e7xd5

14... ♗xd2? 15. ♖xe7+ ♗xe7 16. ♗xd2 ♗xe4 17. ♗xe4±; 14... exd5? 15. ♖h4+—.

#### 15. ♖e4-h4 g7-g6

Fundamentally ruling out threats on the b1-h7 diagonal. Also not bad with the same aim was 15... f5.

#### 16. ♖c1xc8 ♗d8xc8

Better and more natural than 16... ♗xc8.

#### 17. ♖f3-g5!?



Another possible way to develop the attack was 17. ♖e5.

#### 17. ... ♗b4-e7!

The most cold-blooded response! It looks a little provocative to play 17... h5!? although after 18. g4 (18. ♖xh5!? ♗xd2 19. ♗xd2 gxf5

20. ♖xe6 ♗xe6 21. ♗g5+ ♖h8 22. ♗xh5+ gives only a draw) 18... hxf4! Black's fine.

Less clear is 17... ♗xd2 18. ♗xd2 ♗c6 (18... ♖f6? 19. ♖xh7; 18... h5?! 19. g4) 19. ♖xh7 ♖c8 20. ♖f1!.

#### 18. ♗d1-g4 ♗b7-a6!?

Ivanchuk's desire to somehow simplify play is understandable. The move in the game is far from bad, but there were other appealing ideas:

A) 18... ♖f6!? 19. ♗h3 h5 20. g4? ♗c6 21. f3 ♗a4!—+;

B) 18... f5!;

C) 18... h5! 19. ♗g3 (19. ♖xh5? ♖f6) 19... ♗b4! and it's insufficient to play 20. ♖xf7 ♖xf7 21. ♗h6!? ♖f6 22. ♗xg6 because of 22... ♗c7! 23. ♗g5 ♗d2! 24. ♖f7+ ♖xf7.

True, in such a sporting situation it's terrifying even to calculate such lines.

#### 19. ♗g4-h3!

19. ♖xh7 in the given situation would be equivalent to a loss: 19... ♗xg5 20. ♗xg5 ♖xh7 21. ♗xg6+ fxf6 22. ♗h6+ =.

#### 19. ... h7-h5!

Losing immediately is 19... ♗xd3? 20. ♖xh7. It also looks dangerous to play 19... ♗xg5? 20. ♗xg5 h5 21. g4! ♗xd3 22. ♗xd3 hxf4 23. ♗e4!, although after 23... f5! 24. ♗e5 ♖f6! Black miraculously survives: 25. ♗xf6 ♖xf6 26. ♗xf6 ♗c1+ 27. ♖g2 ♗c6+ 28. ♖f1 ♗c1+ 29. ♖e2 ♗xb2+ 30. ♖d3 ♗a3+ 31. ♖c4 ♗a4+ with perpetual check.

#### 20. ♖h4xh5!

Only at the cost of a rook can the diminishing initiative be maintained.

20.g4? ♖xd3 21.♗xd3 hxg4 22.♞xg4 ♖xg5 23.♖xg5 ♜g7 would have brought White's attack to a dead end.

**20. ... g6xh5**  
**21. ♖d3-h7+! ♜g8-g7!**

Weaker is 21...♜h8? 22.♗xh5 ♘f6 23.♗h4!. White's attack is extremely dangerous, and some lines are very beautiful: 23...♖b4 (the most stubborn defence) 24.♖c2+! ♜g7 (24...♜g8 25.♘h7! ♘d5 26.♘f6+ ♘xf6 27.♗g5+) 25.♘xe6+ fxe6 (25...♗xe6 26.♖h6+ ♜h8 27.♖xf8+ ♜g8 28.♖xb4) 26.♗g5+ ♜h8 27.♗h6+ ♜g8 28.♗g6+ ♜h8 29.♖xb4. It seems Black's position can't be saved.

**22. ♗h3xh5**



**22. ... ♘d5-f6?**

Ivanchuk stumbles a step from match victory. However, his task was far from simple. Losing immediately were 22...f6? 23.♘xe6+ ♗xe6 24.♗h6+ and 22...♖e2? 23.♘f3! ♘f6 24.♗h6+ ♜h8 25.♖b1+ ♜g8 26.♖g5.

Leading to the desired goal was 22...♖b4! 23.♘xf7 (the only move) 23...♞xf7 24.♗h6+ (24.♖g5?! ♞f6!) 24...♜h8 25.♖f5+ ♜g8 26.♖xe6 (26.♗g6+ ♜f8 27.♖xe6 ♗b7! 28.♖g5 ♜e8 is also harmless for Black) 26...♗c2! 27.♖xf7+ ♜xf7 28.♗h5+



**Artur Jussupov**

and the battle ends in perpetual check. All that's left to add is that another false trail was 22...♖xg5? 23.♖xg5 f6 24.♖e4! ♞h8 (24...f5 25.♖h6+ ♜f6 26.♗g5+ ♜f7 27.♗g7+-) 25.♗g6+ ♜f8 26.♖xd5! exd5 27.♗xf6+ ♜g8 28.♗g6+ ♜f8 29.♖d2! (White isn't satisfied with perpetual check) 29...♗c4 30.h3! and Black can't escape. But now White wins!

**23. ♘g5xe6+! f7xe6**

23...♗xe6 24.♗h6+ ♜h8 25.♖f5+ ♜g8 26.♖xe6 fxe6 27.♗g6+ ♜h8 28.♖h6 ♞g8 29.♗f7 ♘d5 30.♗xe6 ♖b7 31.g3+-.

**24. ♗h5-h6+ ♜g7-h8**  
**25. ♖h7-f5+ ♜h8-g8**  
**26. ♗h6-g5+ ♜g8-h8**  
**27. ♗g5-h4+ ♜h8-g8**  
**28. ♗h4-g5+ ♜g8-h8**  
**29. ♗g5-h4+ ♜h8-g8**

<b>30.</b>	<b>♔h4-g3+</b>	<b>♚g8-h8</b>
<b>31.</b>	<b>♔g3-h3+</b>	<b>♚h8-g7</b>
<b>32.</b>	<b>♔h3-g3+</b>	<b>♚g7-h8</b>
<b>33.</b>	<b>♔g3-h3+</b>	<b>♚h8-g7</b>
<b>34.</b>	<b>♙f5xe6!</b>	<b>♜c8xe6</b>

Forced.

<b>35.</b>	<b>♔h3xe6</b>	<b>♙e7-d8</b>
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Nothing is changed by 35...♚e8  
36.♙g5 ♙b5 37.h4.

**36. g2-g4!**

White's huge material edge proves decisive.

<b>36.</b>	<b>...</b>	<b>♚f8-e8</b>
<b>37.</b>	<b>♔e6-f5</b>	<b>♙a6-c4</b>
<b>38.</b>	<b>g4-g5</b>	<b>1-0</b>

Jussupow's drive to win was awesome. Although he didn't even get a hint of an edge out of the opening he still kept resourcefully looking for possibilities to complicate play, and after seizing the initiative he didn't let the pace of the attack drop for even a single move. Ivanchuk also put up a decent fight, but he wasn't able to resist his opponent's furious onslaught. A single mistake decided the outcome of an enthralling encounter. You have to give credit to Artur – he did everything he could to make that mistake happen. Encouraged by the victory, Jussupow won the first tiebreak game with black in the same carefree style, which essentially determined the outcome of the battle. The match, which had been an extremely interesting fight, ended in his victory. Jussupow's play in this Candidates Cycle was probably the high point of his career, while the loss in the match seems to have left an indelible mark on the memory of the most talented Ukrainian

grandmaster. In any case, his self-control would later often let him down at the most crucial moments.

The following game took place in a World Championship match, or at least that was the official title of the event. In reality the six-game encounter was the final stage of an enormous knockout tournament held under the auspices of FIDE. Kirsan Ilyumzhinov's interesting invention would years later receive the title of World Cup, which was more appropriate for the format of the event. The players' starting conditions also had little in common with standard notions of a match for the World Championship title. Anand arrived in Lausanne from Groningen after beating Adams in a tiebreak literally a day earlier, while before that he'd beaten five more players. Karpov, on the other hand, had no need to qualify and came into the deciding encounter fresh and prepared. It's no surprise, then, that he was the one who dominated over the course of the whole match. Strictly speaking, the sixth game might not have taken place at all, as the multiple World Champion had had every chance of deciding the outcome of the struggle sooner. Nevertheless, Karpov was left with the task of simply not losing the final game.

The choice of opening plays an extremely important role in such situations. As we've already seen, opening bombs stockpiled for such an occasion can be just what's needed, but more often than not the theoretical ammunition has already been spent. Anand's arsenal was long since empty for the reasons mentioned above. The extremely tired Indian grandmaster had to hope for a miracle.

[A45]

Game 73

**Viswanathan Anand****Anatoly Karpov**

Lausanne m 1998 (8.6)

1. **d2-d4**      ♖g8-f6  
2. **♙c1-g5**

A surprise – Anand had never played like this before. If there's no possibility of giving your opponent a major surprise then you have to be satisfied with a minor one.

2. ...      e7-e6  
3. **e2-e4**      h7-h6  
4. **♙g5xf6**      ♜d8xf6  
5. **♜b1-c3**      d7-d6  
6. **♚d1-d2**      g7-g5



### 7. ♙f1-c4!?

Karpov had already played this position before:

A) 7.0-0-0 ♙g7 8.e5!? dxe5 (8...♚e7!?) 9.dxe5 ♚e7 10.f4 ♜c6 11.♜f3 ♙d7 12.h4 gxf4 13.♚xf4 0-0-0 14.♜e4 ♜b8! Adams-Karpov, Las Palmas 1994;

B) 7.g3 ♙g7 8.0-0-0 ♙d7 (avoiding 8...♜c6 9.♜b5 ♚d8 10.d5) 9.f4 gxf4 10.gxf4 ♜c6 11.♜f3 0-0-0 12.♚e3 ♜b8 13.♙g1 ♜hg8 14.a3 a6 15.e5 ♚e7 Topalov-Karpov, Frankfurt rapid 1997. By the way, Black won both games. The plan thought up by Anand's

coaching team gives the game an original character.

7. ...      ♜b8-c6  
8. ♜g1-e2      ♙f8-g7  
9. ♚a1-d1      ♙c8-d7  
10. 0-0      0-0-0

Castling kingside after playing ...g7-g5 is a little terrifying, while opposite-side castling is something of a moral victory for White.

### 11. ♜c3-b5!

The immediate attack on Black's king position promised little: 11.b4 g4 12.b5 ♜a5 13.♙d3 h5 and it's not clear how White can develop his activity further.

### 11. ...      a7-a6

Obligatory. 11...♜b8 12.d5 exd5 13.exd5 ♜e7 14.♚a5 ♙xb5 15.♙xb5 with the subsequent inclusion of the rook in the attack along the third rank was quite unpleasant, while 15...♚xb2? 16.♚d3 would be too generous a gift for his opponent.

### 12. ♜b5-a3

Now b2-b4-b5 becomes a real threat.

### 12. ...      g5-g4!?

Black, in turn, is obliged to become active on the opposite flank. With the same aim it was worth considering 12...h5!? 13.b4 h4 14.f4 h3. But the most energetic move was probably 12...♚g6!? 13.♙d3 f5.

### 13. f2-f4

13.b4?! ♚g5!.

13. ...      g4xf3  
14. ♚f1xf3      ♚f6-e7

## 15. c2-c3

It's necessary to lose a tempo as the immediate 15.b4 comes up against 15...d5! 16.exd5 ♖xb4 17.dxe6 ♙xe6 18.♙xe6+ fxe6 with simplifications that favour Black.

15. ... h6-h5  
16. ♖d1-f1 ♖d8-f8  
17. b2-b4

Play has become sharp, but there's no cause to talk about any real achievements – there's dynamic equality on the board.

17. ... ♘c6-a7!?

Typical prophylaxis from Karpov. 17...h4 18.b5 axb5 19.♘xb5 h3 would have been sharper. However, it was his opponent who had to strive for sharp play.

18. ♘a3-c2 ♙g7-h6  
19. ♙d2-e1 ♙c8-b8  
20. ♙c4-d3 ♙d7-c6!

With the threat of 21...f5. Black's bishops are ideally placed and can face the future with confidence. However, the time factor begins to play an ever greater role.

21. ♘e2-f4 ♖f8-g8

Sacrificing a pawn. If 21...e5?! then 22.♘xh5! would only become stronger. There was some sense behind 21...h4!?, taking away temptations from his opponent.

22. d4-d5!?

A fundamentally different means of playing for a win is 22.♘xh5 and then aiming to restrain the pawns. In that case Black's task would be simpler:

22...f5! 23.♖h3 ♙g5 24.♘f4 ♙g7! with wonderful compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

22. ... ♙c6-e8

It would be a mistake to play 22...♙xf4? 23.dxc6!.



23. ♙e1-f2

Now it was even more worth considering capturing the pawn: 23.♘xh5!? f5 (White's also fine in the line 23...♙g5!? 24.♘f4 e5?! 25.♖g3) 24.♘f4:

A) Interesting is 24...e5!? 25.♘e6 f4 26.c4 ♙d7 (if 26...♙h5 White simply leaves the rook en prise: 27.b5, with sufficient compensation for the exchange) 27.b5 axb5 28.cxb5 ♘xb5 29.♙a5 – White also has good prospects in this case;

B) 24...♙xf4 25.♖xf4 fxe4 26.♙xe4 exd5 27.♙xd5 ♙h7. This variation is given by Anand as a refutation of 23.♘xh5. It's true that after the automatic 28.h3 Black's fine. But the paradoxical 28.h4! fundamentally alters the evaluation of this whole variation: 28...♙xc2 29.♙xg8 ♖xg8 30.♖f2 ♙g6 31.♖f8 and there's no defence to 32.h5 (here's where the point behind 28.h4! becomes clear), and White wins.

**23. ... ♖h6-g7**

Here as well 23...h4!? would have been perfectly justified.

**24. ♘c2-d4!?**

24.dxe6 fxe6 25.♙c4 ♖h6 26.♘d4 is slightly more accurate.

**24. ... ♙e8-d7**

Short on time, Black prefers to be solid and reliable. It was harder to decide on 24...♘b5!? 25.dxe6 (25.♙xb5 ♙xd4 26.cxd4 ♙xb5; 25.♘xb5 axb5 26.c4) 25...♘d4 26.cxd4 fxe6 or 24...♙xd4 25.cxd4 e5, although here as well Black stood well in all lines.

**25. d5xe6 ♙g7xd4**

**26. c3xd4 f7xe6**

**27. e4-e5 ♙d7-c6**

**28. ♘f4-g6**

The logical consequence of the operation started with 25.dxe6. There wasn't actually anything better for White: 28.♖g3 h4.



**28. ... ♖e7-d8??**

This is essentially the first mistake in the game – and immediately the decisive one! Karpov should have played 28...♙xg6! 29.♙xg6 (29.♖f8+ ♘c8! – he missed this resource in his calcula-

tions – 30.♙xg6 ♖xf8 31.♖xf8 ♖g5–+) 29...♙xf3 30.♖xf3 dxe5 31.dxe5 ♖xb4! (31...♘c6?! 32.♖f6 favours White) 32.♖f6 ♖d4+ 33.♘h1 ♖d8 and at the very least Black is no worse. But in time trouble (and Karpov had almost no time left) better positions than this one have been lost.

**29. ♘g6xh8**

**♙c6xf3**

**30. ♘h8-f7**

**♖d8-h4**

The best defence, but it doesn't change anything. White only had to remain calm and composed.

**31. ♖f2xf3**

Of course not 31.♖xh4?? ♙xg2+ 32.♘h1 ♖f2+ =.

**31. ...**

**♖h4xd4+**

**32. ♘g1-h1**

**d6-d5**

**33. ♖f1-d1!**

White's plan is simple: to take the pawn on h5, after which the passed h-pawn will decide matters. The queenside doesn't play any role whatsoever.

**33. ...**

**♖d4xb4**

**34. ♖d1-b1**

**♖b4-a4**

**35. ♖f3xh5**

**♘a7-c6**

**36. ♖h5-e2**

**♘b8-a7**

**37. ♖e2-f2+**

**b7-b6**

**38. ♖b1-c1!**

**♘a7-b7**

**39. h2-h3!**

The game continues by inertia until time trouble is over.

**39. ...**

**♖g8-c8**

**40. ♖f2-f6**

**♘c6-d4**

**41. ♘f7-d8+!**

Also winning was 41.♘d6+.

**41. ...**

**♘b7-b8**

**42. ♘d8xe6**

The time control has passed and Black resigned.

Contrary to all predictions a sensation occurred. In an almost hopeless situation Anand and his assistants took the only correct decision. Continuing a theoretical discussion with a well-prepared opponent was clearly pointless, so their choice fell on a calm variation which made no particular claims to an edge and wasn't part of the Indian grandmaster's opening repertoire. The new set-up prepared by Anand just increased the surprise effect. Moreover, the find wasn't concrete but conceptual in character, and didn't require the careful checking of variations. So what energy remained could be thrown into the game itself. Strangely enough, nerves let down Karpov, who was in an incomparably better psychological situation. In the play-off rapid games Anand was already the undoubted favourite, but luck deserted him. His exhausted nervous system didn't withstand the load.

Another game that was extremely interesting from a psychological point of view was played in a true World Championship match. Encounters at the highest level can't be compared with any others in terms of mental stress and the burden of responsibility weighing on the shoulders of the players. World Championship matches are unique and only coming into contact with them from the inside gives you a sense of their special microclimate. The impressions of the direct participants are, as a rule, highly subjective, and you can inevitably hear the echoes of that irreconcilable conflict. The impressions and testimonies of witnesses are usually

confidential in nature and not intended for a wider audience.

One of the few exceptions is the previously mentioned book by Evgeny Bareev, one of Kramnik's seconds in the matches against Kasparov and Leko. It includes many interesting details and revelations which usually don't go further than the coaching staff. It's hard to imagine from the side-lines, for example, the fatigue and exhaustion that overwhelmed the players even during the first half of the match. We learn that the many months of preparation with the involvement of whole teams of assistants, including doctors, psychologists and masseurs, were sufficient only for a few games. I can't remember something like that happening in the past, when there were both far fewer people around the champions and emotions were kept more in check. Perhaps the times were simply different.

Brief remarks about fatigue would sometimes make it into notes about a game to explain absurd mistakes, but chess itself was always centre stage. It wasn't the done thing to write about emotional experiences, while weaknesses were hidden rather than exposed. According to Botvinnik: 'Writing memoirs is simple – just cut out everything you shouldn't write about'. On the other hand, the candour of those involved is priceless material for professionals as well as ordinary chess fans. It's just that few will get to use it in practice.

Or maybe it's all down to computers. They subjugate the players with the ruthlessness of a monster, getting them addicted to the drug of absolute truth – supposedly attainable with their aid. The illusion that a game can be decided

at home has increasingly gripped the masses, and can no longer be contained. Analysis, or rather consultation with the MF, goes on until dawn, when the tireless monster carries on working independently until the player wakes and the intoxication can continue. An endless search for truth, multiplied by the vital significance of the result, harasses and drains your spirit much more quickly than the naive chess of the past.

Let's return to the last game of the Kramnik-Leko match, where White was faced with the standard task in such situations: he had to win. All the attempts to level the score before that had run into Leko's insurmountable stubbornness.

[B12]

Game 74

**Vladimir Kramnik****Peter Leko**

Brissago Wch-m 2004 (14)

- |                   |              |
|-------------------|--------------|
| <b>1. e2-e4</b>   | <b>c7-c6</b> |
| <b>2. d2-d4</b>   | <b>d7-d5</b> |
| <b>3. e4-e5!?</b> |              |

Semi-improvisation – according to Bareev. This variation wasn't prepared before the match but was learned by Vladimir in the two days preceding the game. At first glance such an approach to the opening in a deciding game looks strange, to say the least. However, we've already seen how acknowledged experts on theory reject openings they've studied inside out at such moments.

Why does it happen? Probably the solution lies in the realm of psychology. At a moment of high nervous tension excessive knowledge becomes a hindrance. Everything that's been well-studied

seems insufficient, especially as you automatically ascribe your own knowledge (often incorrectly) to your opponent. In contrast, any fresh idea seems appealing and promising. Of course, it's a mirage, and the novelty and appeal are explained by a lack of familiarity with the subtleties of the variation you've only just looked at. Nevertheless, such an approach also has its positive sides: you activate your remaining energy to the full, whereas those resources would have remained dormant while you were playing through positions you knew by heart. Mobilisation and mood are key factors in a deciding battle.

- |                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>3. ...</b>     | <b>♙c8-f5</b> |
| <b>4. h2-h4!?</b> | <b>h7-h6</b>  |
| <b>5. g2-g4</b>   | <b>♙f5-d7</b> |



- |                  |              |
|------------------|--------------|
| <b>6. ♖b1-d2</b> | <b>c6-c5</b> |
|------------------|--------------|

6...e6 7. ♖b3 a5 8.a4 ♖a6 9. ♙e3 (9. ♙d2 b6 10. ♙e3 h5 11.gxh5 ♖h6 12. ♖e2 ♖f5) 9...♚c7 10. ♖f3 h5 11.gxh5 ♚xh5 12.c3 ♖e7.

- |                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| <b>7. d4xc5</b> | <b>e7-e6</b> |
|-----------------|--------------|

7...♖c6 8.f4 (8. ♖b3 ♖xe5 9. ♚xd5 ♖c6!) 8...e6 9. ♖b3 ♙xc5 10. ♖xc5 ♚a5+ 11.c3 ♚xc5; 7...♚c7!?

- |                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| <b>8. ♖d2-b3</b> | <b>♙f8xc5</b>  |
| <b>9. ♖b3xc5</b> | <b>♚d8-a5+</b> |



**10. c2-c3 ♖a5xc5**

**11. ♘g1-f3**

11.♙e3!? ♖c7 12.f4 ♘c6 13.♘f3 f6!?

14.b4!? fxe5 15.b5 ♘a5 16.♘xe5  
♖xc3+ 17.♗f2 ♘f6.

**11. ... ♘g8-e7**

**12. ♙f1-d3 ♘b8-c6**

**13. ♙c1-e3 ♖c5-a5**

**14. ♖d1-d2**

14.♖e2 ♘g6 15.♙d2 ♖c7 16.♙xg6  
fxg6.

**14. ... ♘e7-g6**

14...d4!? 15.cxd4 (15.♘xd4 ♘xe5  
16.♙e2 ♖d5; 15.♙xd4 ♘xd4 16.cxd4  
♖d5 17.♞h3 ♙b5) 15...♘b4 16.0-0  
♙b5 17.♙xb5+ ♖xb5.

**15. ♙e3-d4! ♘c6xd4**

15...h5!?

**16. c3xd4**



**16. ... ♖a5xd2+**

16...♖b6!? 17.0-0-0 ♙b5 18.♙c2 ♘e7  
19.♗b1 0-0-0 20.♞c1 ♗b8 21.♖f4  
♘c6.

**17. ♗e1xd2 ♘g6-f4?!**

17...♘e7 18.♞ac1 ♘c6.

**18. ♞a1-c1! h6-h5**

18...♘xd3!? 19.♗xd3 ♗e7 20.g5 ♙c6  
21.♗e3.

**19. ♞h1-g1 ♙d7-c6**

19...♞c8 20.♞xc8+ ♙xc8 21.gxh5  
♘xh5 22.♞c1 ♗d8 23.♗e3; 19...♘xd3  
20.♗xd3 hxg4 21.♞xg4 g6 22.♞c7  
♞b8 23.♘g5 ♞f8 24.♞g1 ♗d8  
25.♞gc1.

**20. g4xh5 ♘f4xh5**

**21. b2-b4! a7-a6**

**22. a2-a4!**



**22. ... ♗e8-d8?**

A) 22...♙xa4 23.♞c7 ♙b5 24.♙b1!:

A1) 24...0-0 25.♞g5 ♘f4 (25...g6  
26.♙xg6 fxg6 27.♞xg6+ ♗h8  
28.♘g5+-) 26.♗e3±;

A2) 24...b6 25.♘g5 0-0 26.♙h7+  
♗h8 27.♙c2! ♗g8 28.♙d1 ♘f4  
29.♗e3±;

A3) 24...♙d7 25.♘g5 ♞f8 26.♗e3;

B) 22...♗e7! 23.b5 axb5 24.axb5  
♙d7 25.♞c7 b6:

B1) 26.♘g5 ♞hc8 (26...f6!?)  
27.♞xc8 ♞xc8 28.♘xf7 ♗xf7  
29.♙g6+ ♗f8 30.♙xh5 ♞c4 31.♞g4  
♙e8;

B2) 26.♞b7 ♞hc8 27.♞xb6 ♞a2+  
28.♗e3 ♞c3 29.♙d1 ♞b2 30.♘e1  
♞xb5.

**23. ♘f3-g5 ♙c6-e8**

23...♖f8 24.♗e2 ♘f4 25.♘h7+—.

## 24. b4-b5

24.♗e3!.

## 24. ... ♘h5-f4?!

24...axb5 25.♗xb5!:

A) 25...♘f4?! 26.♗e3 ♘g6 (26...f6 27.♘f7+! ♗xf7 28.♖xg7 ♘g2+ 29.♖xg2 fxe5 30.dxe5) 27.♗xe8 ♗xe8 28.♘xe6 fxe6 29.♖xg6 ♗f7 30.♖g4;

B) 25...b6! 26.♗xe8 ♖xe8 (26...♗xe8 27.♖c7+—) 27.♘xf7+ ♗d7 28.♘d6 ♖f8 29.♗e3 ♖xa4 30.♖c3 ♖aa8.

## 25. b5-b6! ♘f4xd3

25...♖c8 26.♖xc8+ ♗xc8 27.♖c1+ ♗b8 28.♖c7+—; 25...f6 26.♘f3+—.

- |             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| 26. ♗d2xd3  | ♖a8-c8  |
| 27. ♖c1xc8+ | ♗d8xc8  |
| 28. ♖g1-c1+ | ♗e8-c6  |
| 29. ♘g5xf7  | ♖h8xh4  |
| 30. ♘f7-d6+ | ♗c8-d8  |
| 31. ♖c1-g1  | ♖h4-h3+ |

31...♖h7 32.a5 ♗e7 33.♗e3 ♗f8 34.♖c1+—.

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 32. ♗d3-e2 | ♖h3-a3  |
| 33. ♖g1xg7 | ♖a3xa4  |
| 34. f2-f4! | ♖a4-a2+ |

34...♖xd4 35.f5! exf5 36.e6.

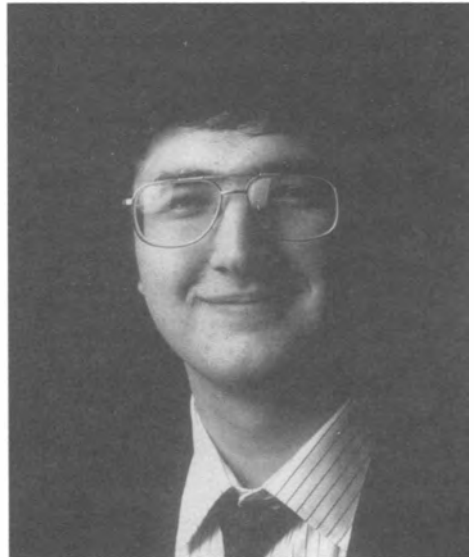
- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 35. ♗e2-f3 | ♖a2-a3+ |
| 36. ♗f3-g4 | ♖a3-d3  |

36...♖a1 37.♘xb7+ ♗xb7 38.♖xb7 ♖g1+ 39.♗h5.

- |             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| 37. f4-f5!  | ♖d3xd4+ |
| 38. ♗g4-g5  | e6xf5   |
| 39. ♗g5-f6  | ♖d4-g4  |
| 40. ♖g7-c7  | ♖g4-h4  |
| 41. ♘d6-f7+ | 1-0     |

In this case it was Leko himself who was chiefly to blame for his defeat. Playing for simplification at all costs turned into making small concessions, while at the culminating moment everything was decided by a single mistake. You can't, however, underestimate his opponent's achievement. Maintaining your composure in such a situation and not rushing headlong into unclear complications is something by no means everyone is capable of. Kramnik's play in the final stages was simply flawless.

The deciding game in a tournament is a much more ordinary event. The stakes, as a rule, are lower, and the conditions are fundamentally different. Sometimes even a win in your own game won't bring the desired success, as the contest involves other participants. Never mind the fact that the tournament goals of the players may be totally different, the mental pressure they experience is almost incomparable.



Vladimir Kramnik

In the situation described below, however, everything was the same as in a match. In the last round of the Interzonal Tournament only a win would allow Polugaevsky to catch his opponent and snatch a qualifying place for the Candidates' Tournament. Not only had deciding games gone badly for Lev in the past, as a rule, but he was also up against Lajos Portisch, who was one of the world's best grandmasters at that point in time.

How should you get in the mood for such an important encounter? What strategy should you select for the game and what opening variation should you settle on? Polugaevsky talked about his feelings, doubts and hesitations with stunning openness in the book, *The Birth of a Variation*.

[A09]

**Lev Polugaevsky**

**Lajos Portisch**

Petropolis izt 1973 (17)

Game 75

- |    |        |       |
|----|--------|-------|
| 1. | ♘g1-f3 | d7-d5 |
| 2. | c2-c4  | d5-d4 |
| 3. | g2-g3  |       |

An unexpected opening choice for such an important game, but in general this is one of the main problems in such a situation. It was essential to surprise the opponent – but how? Polugaevsky, as he says himself, even seriously considered the possibility of 1.e4, but then decided to be true to himself. Perhaps he decided on such a move order under the influence of the game against Panno he'd lost a few rounds earlier? That game developed a little differently, but the outlines of the position were similar: 3.e3 ♘c6 4.exd4 ♘xd4 5.♘xd4 ♙xd4 6.d3 e5 Panno-Polugaevsky, Petropolis 1973.

- |    |        |        |
|----|--------|--------|
| 3. | ...    | c7-c5  |
| 4. | e2-e3  | ♘b8-c6 |
| 5. | e3xd4  | ♘c6xd4 |
| 6. | ♘f3xd4 | ♙d8xd4 |
| 7. | d2-d3  |        |

Also possible is 7.♘c3 ♙g4 8.♙e2 ♙xe2 9.♙xe2 e6, Kortchnoi-Mecking, Augusta m-3 1974.

- |    |         |        |
|----|---------|--------|
| 7. | ...     | ♙c8-g4 |
| 8. | f2-f3!? |        |

Essentially forced. The position after 8.♙e2 ♙xe2 9.♙xe2 0-0-0 is hard to play for a win.

- |    |     |        |
|----|-----|--------|
| 8. | ... | ♙g4-f5 |
|----|-----|--------|



9. g3-g4!?

But this was far from an obvious choice. It was perfectly possible to play 9.♘c3 ♘f6 (9...0-0-0 10.♘b5 ♙e5+ 11.♙e2 favours White) 10.♙f4 with interesting play.

- |    |     |        |
|----|-----|--------|
| 9. | ... | ♙f5-g6 |
|----|-----|--------|

It was more cautious to play 9...♙d7 but most likely White's next move came as a total surprise for Portisch.

10. ♙d1-a4+!!

How can you voluntarily exchange queens in a 'must-win situation' – even if it's objectively the best move? It's only

possible to be ready to take such a decision if you're in the perfect mood for the upcoming encounter.

Polugaevsky: 'What should you do? Train yourself to take a calm and indifferent attitude to the upcoming struggle? Or get yourself into the most fighting mood possible? Probably neither would be appropriate. The first would get you in the mood for too calm a calm struggle, while with the second attitude it would be easy to 'burn out'. A synthesis is necessary – enormous will to win combined with cool judgement.' The wonderful move in the game is the fruit of that remarkably successful synthesis.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 10. ...     | ♔d4-d7 |
| 11. ♖a4xd7+ | ♕e8xd7 |
| 12. ♘b1-c3  | e7-e5  |
| 13. f3-f4   | e5xf4  |
| 14. ♙c1xf4  |        |

At the cost of exchanging queens no small amount has been achieved: Black's behind in development and the following simplifications lead to further concessions.

- |         |        |
|---------|--------|
| 14. ... | ♙f8-d6 |
|---------|--------|

The attempt to somehow consolidate with 14...♖e8+ 15.♕d2 ♘e7 (15...♙d6 16.♙xd6 ♕xd6 17.♘b5+ involves the loss of a pawn) 16.♖e1 ♘c6 brings no relief: 17.♖xe8 ♕xe8 18.♙g2.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 15. ♙f4xd6 | ♕d7xd6 |
| 16. 0-0-0  | ♘g8-f6 |
| 17. h2-h3  | ♖a8-d8 |

Now after 18.♙g2 the calm 18...♕c7 will follow. It seems as though Black has held on, but another transformation of the position follows.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 18. ♘c3-b5+ | ♔d6-d7 |
|-------------|--------|

Polugaevsky said he was a little worried about 18...♕e5 but such a move is easier to propose than to make.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 19. ♘b5xa7 | ♖d8-a8 |
| 20. ♘a7-b5 | ♖a8xa2 |
| 21. ♕c1-c2 | ♖a2-a4 |
| 22. ♕c2-c3 | ♖h8-e8 |
| 23. ♙f1-g2 | ♖e8-e2 |

Black is also at the top of his game! After the natural 23...b6 24.♖he1 ♖xe1 25.♖xe1 the black rook would find itself out of play.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 24. ♙g2xb7  | ♖a4-a2 |
| 25. ♖d1-b1  | ♖e2-e3 |
| 26. ♕c3-b3! | ♖a2-a5 |
| 27. ♖b1-d1  | h7-h5! |

The variation 27...♙xd3? 28.♕c3 ♘d5+! 29.♙xd5 ♙e4+ 30.♕d2 ♖d3+ 31.♕e2 ♖xd5 32.♘c3! ♙xh1 33.cxd5 ♙g2 34.♕f2 ♙xh3 35.♕g3+— seems complicated only to the uninitiated, while for grandmasters it's quite simple.

- |           |
|-----------|
| 28. g4-g5 |
|-----------|



- |         |         |
|---------|---------|
| 28. ... | ♘f6-h7? |
|---------|---------|

Essentially the only mistake in the game, but it proved to be enough. After the correct 28...♘e8! 29.♕c3 ♘d6

30. ♖xd6 ♗xd6 31. h4 Black's of course still a long way away from a draw, but it's also extremely difficult for White to win.

<b>29. h3-h4</b>	<b>♖h7-f8</b>
<b>30. ♖h1-e1</b>	<b>♗e3-h3</b>
<b>31. ♗e1-e5!</b>	<b>♖f8-e6</b>
<b>32. ♗b7-e4</b>	<b>♗g6xe4</b>

Even worse is 32... ♖xh4 33. ♗xg6 fxg6 34. ♗d5+ ♗e7 35. ♗e1 ♗a6 36. ♖xc5.

**33. ♗e5xe4 ♗a5-a8?!**

33... ♖f3 is more stubborn, preventing White's next move.

<b>34. ♖d1-f1!</b>	<b>♗a8-f8</b>
<b>35. ♗b3-c3</b>	<b>f7-f5</b>

This hastens the end, but there was no longer any way to survive.

<b>36. ♗e4-e5</b>	<b>f5-f4</b>
<b>37. ♖f1-a1!</b>	<b>♖h3-e3</b>
<b>38. ♗a1-a7+</b>	<b>♗d7-c8</b>
<b>39. ♗e5xe6</b>	<b>1-0</b>

Polugaevsky can be counted firmly among the followers of the Botvinnik approach to chess: comprehensive and objective study of a problem followed by a steadfast adherence to the conclusions drawn. But if the unwavering character of the Patriarch was perfectly suited to such an approach, it was all much tougher for Lev. In terms of chess everything was clear. To reach the truth you needed only time and effort, and neither of those were ever an obstacle for Polugaevsky. However, he had much more trouble with character. For Botvinnik hesitations and doubts didn't exist – each decision he took was always the only correct one. Lev, constantly doubting and lacking self-confidence, was a totally different kettle of fish. That

was particularly evident at the most crucial moments, when the fate of a tournament or a whole cycle was at stake. It took many years for him to overcome setbacks and establish his own formula for an inner state that would allow him to achieve the very highest goals.

Victory in this game marked a new stage in Polugaevsky's career. It wasn't simply a matter of managing to outplay one of the world's best chess players in fine style. Lev achieved something much greater: he overcame himself. After also successfully getting through the next challenge – the play-off against Portisch and Geller – he qualified for the Candidates' Tournament and for many years to come established a place for himself among the world chess elite.

The next instructive encounter is from my own sporting biography. This game was played in the final round of the USSR Championship, which was at the same time a zonal tournament. Lev Psakhis was leading, Kasparov was half a point behind, and the author of these lines was in third, but no longer with any chance of catching the distant leaders. The main goal – qualifying for the interzonal tournament – had been achieved, and I was looking forward to the upcoming encounter. There was no doubt it was going to be a fight, as only a win would give the young Garry a chance to challenge for the Championship title. I felt wonderful and thought I was in perfect condition: a little nervous, but at the same time in complete control of myself. My confidence that I'd succeed increased even more when I saw my opponent. He clearly couldn't handle the tension. Such a state, I knew from personal experience, promised nothing good.

[E74]

Game 76

**Vladimir Tukmakov**  
**Garry Kasparov**

Frunze ch-URS 1981 (17)

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4  | ♘g8-f6 |
| 2. c2-c4  | g7-g6  |
| 3. ♖b1-c3 | ♙f8-g7 |
| 4. e2-e4  | d7-d6  |
| 5. ♙f1-e2 | 0-0    |
| 6. ♙c1-g5 |        |

The opening variation that occurred in the game was easy to predict: at the time the King's Indian was Kasparov's main weapon, and I often played the Averbakh System.

- |          |         |
|----------|---------|
| 6. ...   | c7-c5   |
| 7. d4-d5 | b7-b5!? |

An unambiguous display of aggression! For the 18-year-old junior this was the first chance to become USSR Champion, and he was literally shaking with excitement. In contrast, I was calm and sure of success. I remember that at some point I even started to pity my opponent – in such a nervous state I'd be completely helpless. As for the objective evaluation of the last move, it's not bad at all. You get a version of the Benko Gambit that's quite good for Black.

- |           |       |
|-----------|-------|
| 8. c4xb5  | a7-a6 |
| 9. a2-a4! | h7-h6 |

An improvement on 9...♙a5 10.♙d2 ♖bd7 11.♞a3!±, Kasparov-Spassky, Tilburg 1981. After achieving a won position White eventually lost that game.

10. ♙g5-d2

The inclusion of 10.♙f4 g5! in the variation that occurred in the game is more in Black's favour.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 10. ...    | e7-e6  |
| 11. d5xe6  | ♙c8xe6 |
| 12. ♖g1-f3 | a6xb5  |
| 13. ♙e2xb5 |        |

13.axb5? is weaker due to 13...♙b3!

14.♙c1 ♞xa1 15.♙xa1 ♞e8.

- |         |        |
|---------|--------|
| 13. ... | ♖b8-a6 |
| 14. 0-0 | ♖a6-c7 |

On 14...♖b4, 15.♞e1 is also not bad.

15. ♞f1-e1

If White preserved the bishop he'd lose the advantage: 15.♙e2 d5! 16.exd5 ♖fxd5 17.♖xd5 ♖xd5 with sufficient compensation for the pawn.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 15. ...    | ♖c7xb5 |
| 16. ♖c3xb5 |        |

16.axb5 ♞xa1 17.♙xa1 d5 18.exd5 ♖xd5 and Black has good chances of equalising.

- |              |        |
|--------------|--------|
| 16. ...      | d6-d5  |
| 17. e4xd5    | ♖f6xd5 |
| 18. ♖f3-e5!? |        |

A good move! Less clear is 18.♙c2 ♖b4! 19.♙xb4 cxb4 when the strong bishop pair guarantees Black excellent counterplay.

18. ... ♞f8-e8



The players had used up no small amount of time resolving problems. However, when writing a commentary on the game I was amazed to discover that right up until this moment we were repeating the game A. Petrosian-Arbakov, Moscow 1981. It's possible that came as a belated discovery only for me, while Garry was simply remembering the necessary page – it's well-known that in his youth he stood out for his photographic memory. In any case, Petrosian chose 19. ♖c1!?, to which Black replied 19... ♗h4?! (19... ♕f5 is interesting). White got an edge but lost. It was also worth considering 19. ♘c4.

19. ♖a1-c1!? ♕e6-f5!



20. ♘e5-c6!?

Playing for the maximum! Although this move took me quite a lot of time I evaluated both the position on the board and my own condition very optimistically. The natural 20. ♘c4 was rejected because of 20... ♖xe1+ 21. ♕xe1 ♘f4! 22. ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 and White has to fight for equality. I didn't like weakening the position with 20. f4 based on general considerations. Black can play 20... ♘f6 with complex play. Kasparov recommends 20... g5!? 21. ♗h5 ♖e7. Finally, 20. ♕a5!? ♖xa5 21. ♘c6 ♖xe1+

22. ♗xe1 ♗a8! 23. ♗xa5 (23. ♘a5 ♘f4) 23... ♗xc6 also favours Black.

20. ... ♖d8-d7!

Black doesn't hold back from sacrificing a second pawn in order to truly complicate the situation. During the game we both evaluated the position arising after 20... ♗b6!? 21. ♘a5 ♖xe1+ 22. ♗xe1 in White's favour, but things aren't so clear. The MF gives 22... ♕d3, while it's also possible to play 21... ♖ed8.

21. ♖c1xc5 ♖e8xe1+  
22. ♗d1xe1

Much worse is 22. ♕xe1 ♖e8!.

22. ... ♖a8-e8!

Of course Black didn't get into such crazy complications in order to switch to a battle for equality: 22... ♖xa4!? 23. b4 ♖a1 24. ♖c1 ♖xc1 25. ♗xc1, although here as well he's got some compensation for the pawn.

23. ♗e1-c1

If 23. ♗f1 then 23... ♘b6! is even stronger than in the game.

23. ... ♘d5-b6!

Also interesting is the immediate 23... ♖e2!?

24. b2-b3 ♖e8-e2  
25. ♕d2-a5?!

The tension on the board kept rising, and my opponent's excitement also hadn't lessened. It was as if Kasparov was imbuing the black pieces with his own energy. White, on the other hand, was gradually deviating from the correct path. The choice really wasn't easy. Interesting is 25. ♕e3!? ♘b2! 26. ♗f1

♙d3 27...♙d4! ♙xb5 (nothing is altered by 27...♙d2 28.♖e1 ♖e2 29.♖d1 ♙xb5 30.♙xb5 ♙xd4 31.♖xe2 ♖xc6) 28.♙xb5 ♙xd4 29.♖xe2 (29.♙xd4? ♙d2 30.♙f3 ♙d1 31.♙xb6 ♖d3!-+) 29...♖xc6 and Black should hold this position.

The best line was 25.♙c3! ♙c2 26.♖e1 ♙xc3 (26...♙e4?! 27.♙e5!±) 27.♙xc3 and the compensation for the two pawns is insufficient, for example: 27...♖e6!? 28.♖d1! ♙g4 29.♖b1! (29.♖a1 ♖f6) 29...♙b2 30.♖a1 ♖xb3 31.♙b5 ♖xc3 32.♙e7+ ♙h7 33.♙xb2 ♙d1 34.♖xd1 ♖xb2 35.a5±.

**25. ... ♙f5-e4!**

25...♙b2!? 26.♖f1 ♖e6! with an extremely complex position. Weaker is 26...♙d3 27.♙b4! ♙xb5 28.♙xb5 ♙d2 29.♙xb6 ♙d1 30.♙d5 ♙xf1+ 31.♙xf1±.

**26. ♙c6-e5**

26.♙xb6? ♖g4 27.♖f1 ♖e1! is truly bad, but it's possible to play 26.♖f1 ♙b2 27.♙xb6. However, Black has a pleasant choice between 27...♙xg2 with a quick draw and 27...♙xc6 with compensation for the pawns.

**26. ... ♖d7-e7!**



**27. ♙b5-d4?**

My sense of danger nevertheless let me down! 27.♖f1!? ♙a2 28.♙xb6 ♙xe5 29.♙c3 ♙xh2+! 30.♙xh2 ♖h4+ 31.♙g1 ♙xg2! 32.♙xg2 ♖g4+ led to a draw. The same result would have followed after 27.♙xb6 ♙xe5 28.♙xe5 ♖xe5 29.♙d4 ♖e6 30.♙c3 ♖g4 31.♙xe4 ♖xe4 32.♖c8+ ♖e8 33.♖xe8+ ♙xe8=.

The 'inhuman' 27.♙f3!? ♙xf3 28.gxf3 ♖h4 (28...♙d7 29.♙c2!±) 29.♖f1 ♙a2 30.♙xb6 ♙a1 31.♖xa1 ♙xa1 32.a5 ♖h3!= also confirms the objective evaluation of the position.

**27. ... ♖e2-a2**  
**28. ♙a5xb6**

I was on the verge of playing my intended 28.♙dc6 but at the last moment I noticed 28...♖xc5!.

28.♙df3 ♙xf3 29.♙xf3 ♙a1 30.♙xb6 ♙xc1+ 31.♙xc1 ♖e6 32.a5 holds the draw, but unfortunately for White there's the lethal 28...♙d5!.

**28. ... ♙g7xe5**  
**29. ♖c1-e3?**

You can't cheat fate! The game was ultimately decided by the same oversight. Absolutely the only move was 29.♖e1!:



A) 29...♖d6!?:

A1) 30.♙e2?! ♙b7! (30...♙xh2+ 31.♙h1 ♙e5 32.♙c3! ♖f6 33.♙g1



♙xc3 34.♚c8+ ♔h7 35.♚xc3 ♙xb6  
36.♙xe4 ♙xf2+ 37.♔h2) 31.a5 ♙e6!;

A) 30.♘b5! ♙e6 31.♚xe5! ♙xe5  
32.♙d4 ♙g5 (32...♙e6 33.h3) 33.g3  
♙c6 34.♘a7 ♙d7 35.♙e4;

B) 29...♙f6!? 30.♘e2! (30.♚xe5  
♙xe5 31.f3 ♙g5 32.g3 ♙d5) 30...♚a1  
31.♚c1 ♙g5 32.♙f1 (32.g3 ♙f6!)  
32...♚xc1 33.♘xc1 ♙f4 34.f3 ♙xh2+  
35.♔f2 ♙h4+ 36.♔e2 ♙b7;

C) 29...♔h7!! A move that's absolutely incomprehensible for a flesh-and-blood player, drawn from the MF's vaults. After normal continuations it seems as though White should hold. However, the evaluating function of the Monster is clearly inferior to its calculation. It evaluates its main variation 30.♘f3 ♙f4 31.♚c8 ♙xf3 32.♚h8+ ♔xh8 33.♙d4+ ♙e5 34.♙xe5+ ♙xe5 35.♙xe5+ ♔h7 36.gxf3 ♚a3 as won. Allow me to disagree!

## 29. ... ♙e7xc5 0-1

As a result Kasparov and Psakhis shared the Championship, while I lost out on the bronze medal. The future World Champion successfully orchestrated the scenario for the upcoming game, ideally adapting it to his own temperament and inner state. The main thing, though, was that he managed to put it all into practice successfully. I, on the other hand, had overestimated my own readiness to play on my opponent's ground. As future events showed, however, it was something very few managed.

How can you best get prepared for a deciding game? How can you accurately determine that most mysterious of ratios, where the inevitable excitement is effectively tempered by reason? Unfortunately, no universal algorithm exists. A

person is too complex a construction to be able to take into account absolutely all the nuances, so the formula for success is always individual. Time and experience are the best aids in getting to know yourself, while a chess analysis of wins and losses is also an essential component of such work. It's very important to determine the reasons for annoying mistakes and happy inspirations, strange oversights and unexpected bouts of time trouble. However, the human factor plays no less a role. By carefully listening in to yourself, analysing your own state and introducing corresponding adjustments, over time you can prepare for such trials, establishing a particular state that suits you best. It also goes without saying that the basis for the deciding game can be created only by playing well over the course of a whole event.

Tournaments differ. It's senseless to compare the importance of the USSR Championships and the Interzonal Tournaments with an average open. The Soviet Championships have long since disappeared along with the country that ran them. The Interzonal Tournaments had also seemed destined for a long life, but new events have appeared that are fully comparable to their predecessors in terms of significance.

The last round of the fourth Grand Prix tournament in Nalchik saw an encounter between the main candidates for the top prize. A draw would guarantee both players a share of first place and the corresponding bonus points, not to mention decent prize money. It didn't seem difficult at all to predict a peaceful outcome. Peter Leko, who had Black, surely would have had no objection. His opponent, however, had a different opinion.

[E55]

Game 77

**Levon Aronian**  
**Peter Leko**

Nalchik 2009 (13)

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4   | ♘g8-f6 |
| 2. c2-c4   | e7-e6  |
| 3. ♖b1-c3  | ♙f8-b4 |
| 4. e2-e3   | 0-0    |
| 5. ♙f1-d3  | d7-d5  |
| 6. ♘g1-f3  | c7-c5  |
| 7. 0-0     | d5xc4  |
| 8. ♙d3xc4  | ♘b8-d7 |
| 9. ♚d1-e2  | b7-b6  |
| 10. ♜f1-d1 | c5xd4  |
| 11. e3xd4  | ♙b4xc3 |
| 12. b2xc3  | ♙c8-b7 |

This position has been well-known for a long time. 12...♚c7 13.♙d2 ♙b7 14.♙d3 ♜ac8 was seen in the game Polugaevsky-Kortchnoi, (Tbilisi, 26th USSR Championship) back in 1959.

### 13. ♙c4-b3!?

A relatively rare continuation. Usually White chooses 13.♙d3; it promises White little to play 13.♙b2 ♚c7 14.♙d3 ♘d5! 15.♚e4 ♘7f6 (less accurate is 15...♘5f6 16.♚h4 ♙xf3 17.gxf3. The pair of white bishops more than compensates for the spoiled pawn structure, Korobov-Hoffmann, Pardubice 2004) 16.♚e5 ♜ac8 17.c4 ♘f4 Lautier-Carlsen, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005.

### 13. ... ♚d8-c7

Also tried was 13...♘d5!? 14.♙d2 ♚f6 (14...♚c7!?) 15.c4 ♘f4 16.♚e3 ♘g6 17.♘g5! ♘e7 18.♘e4 Korobov-Kravtsov, Poltava 2008.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 14. c3-c4  | ♜f8-e8 |
| 15. ♙c1-b2 |        |



### 15. ... ♚c7-f4!

The attempt to immediately resolve the situation in the centre with the help of 15...♙xf3 16.♚xf3 e5 leads, after 17.d5, to a position where the passed pawn and bishop pair guarantee White a small but persistent edge. This queen attack by Black is typical of this variation.

### 16. ♚e2-e3

After 16.a4 the release of tension with 16...♙xf3 17.♚xf3 ♚xf3 18.gxf3 e5 leads to equality. In case of 16.♘d2 ♜ac8 Black doesn't have any particular problems.

### 16. ... ♚f4-f5

16...♚xe3?! 17.fxe3 improves White's pawn structure.

### 17. ♘f3-e1!?



17...♙f3 was threatened, with equality. Black has to somehow solve the problem of the pawns on c4 and d4.

**17. ...                      b6-b5!?**

17...e5 18.d5 ♖ac8 favours White.

**18. c4-c5                      ♘f6-d5**

18...a5 is interesting.

**19. ♕e3-g3**

The queen exchange with 19.♕d3 ♕xd3 20.♘xd3 a5 would of course have suited Leko.

**19. ...                      ♘d5-f4**

**20. ♖d1-d2                      ♘d7-f6**

**21. f2-f3                      ♘f6-h5**

**22. ♕g3-f2                      ♙b7-d5**

Natural, but by no means obligatory. 22...a5!? 23.♙c2 ♕g5 24.♗h1 ♙c6, leaving the d5-square vacant and preparing the advance of the pawns on the queenside, was, it seems, more flexible.

**23. ♙b3-c2                      ♕f5-g5**

**24. ♗g1-h1**



Visually Black's position looks perfectly good, but the knights get in each other's way. It would be good to switch the h5-knight to c6, but that's difficult to achieve in practice. It was still worth considering 24...e5 or 24...b4.

**24. ...                      ♙d5-c4?!**

A strange decision. The light-squared bishop, without being forced in any way, abandons the wonderful outpost on d5. It's probable that Peter, having used up a lot of time and energy, had gradually lost the thread of the game. In such chameleon-like positions it often happens.

**25. g2-g3                      ♘f4-g6?!**

Another difficult-to-explain move. If the point of Black's previous move was to free up the d5-square for the knight, then the knight should have gone there.

**26. ♘e1-g2                      ♙c4-d5**

Admitting the mistake. Time trouble was compounding all Black's other problems.

**27. ♘g2-e3                      ♘h5-f6**

The difficulties become more and more evident. If 27...♙c6 there's the unpleasant 28.d5! ♙xd5 (28...exd5 29.♘f5) 29.♘xd5 exd5 30.f4 ♕e7 31.♖xd5.

**28. h2-h4                      ♕g5-h5**

**29. ♘e3xd5!                      ♘f6xd5?!**

Knowing the further course of the game it's easy to recommend 29...♕xd5. That was also objectively the best decision, as now the black queen starts to feel uncomfortable.

**30. ♖a1-e1                      ♖e8-d8**

**31. ♖d2-e2                      ♖a8-b8**

**32. ♙b2-c1                      h7-h6**

**33. ♗h1-g2**

Storm clouds are gathering above the queen.



**33. ...**                      ♖d5-c3?

A typical time trouble move! After 33...a5 it was also strong to play 34. ♖e5! ♜xe5 35. ♖xe5 but in the game a much worse form of that occurred.

**34. ♖e2-e5!**                ♜g6xe5

**35. ♖e1xe5**

Now Black's position falls apart.

**35. ...**                      f7-f5

**36. ♙c2-b3**

36. ♖xe6! ♖e8 37. ♖e1 b4 38. c6 was even stronger.

**36. ...**                      ♜c3-d5

**37. ♖e5xe6**                ♜g8-h8?

The final mistake, and a fully understandable one given the time trouble frenzy. Black gets the king out of the unpleasant pin but gives his opponent time for a decisive mobilisation of forces. The relatively lesser evil was 37...a5!? 38. ♖e5 ♖f7 39. a3 a4 40. ♙a2 b4 41. axb4 ♖xb4 but that would also provide little comfort.

**38. ♖f2-e1!**                ♜d5-f6

**39. ♖e1-e5**

Complete domination!

**39. ...**                      ♖d8-e8

**40. c5-c6**                ♖b8-c8

**41. ♖e5xb5**                ♖h5-g6

**42. h4-h5**

Ruling out tactics like 42. ♙f4 ♖xe6 43. ♙xe6 ♜h5 but that would have altered nothing: 44. ♙xc8 ♜xf4+ 45. ♜h2 ♜h5 46. ♖b8.

**42. ...**                      ♖g6xh5

**43. ♙c1-f4**

The rest is clear without words.

**43. ...**                      a7-a6

**44. ♖b5xa6**                ♜f6-h7

**45. c6-c7**                ♜h7-g5

**46. ♖e6xe8+**              ♖h5xe8

**47. d4-d5**                ♖c8-a8

**48. ♖a6-c4**                ♜h8-h7

**49. d5-d6**                ♖e8-e1

**50. ♖c4-f1**                ♖e1-e8

**51. ♖f1-d3**                ♖e8-d7

**52. ♖d3-c4**                ♖d7-e8

**53. ♙f4xg5**                h6xg5

**54. ♖c4-g8+**              1-0

Aronian's victory was determined, first and foremost, by his resolve to fight when many would have preferred simply to fix the result. In such situations things are usually limited to some probing in the opening. If White doesn't achieve a safe advantage a mutual understanding is quickly reached. It can't be ruled out that Leko was counting on just such a scenario. In any case, after a pretty successful opening he started to play hesitantly. Aronian, on the other hand, maintained his composure and self-control to the very end.

A much more complex and confusing situation arose before the last round of the final tournament of the Grand Prix in Astrakhan. A few people had a claim to second place in the overall standings,

which would grant them a place in the Candidates' Tournament. The person who theoretically had the best chances was Radjabov, playing White against Wang Yue. Not only would a win in the encounter guarantee the desired result, but even a draw would give him excellent practical chances. In that case only a win for Gashimov with black against Leko would put Vugar into the Candidates. Wang Yue, in turn, wasn't just a bystander in all this – a win in the last game would also put him among the contenders.

[C42]

Game 78

**Teimour Radjabov**

**Wang Yue**

Astrakhan 2010 (13)

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. e2-e4  | e7-e5  |
| 2. ♖g1-f3 | ♟g8-f6 |

A somewhat strange choice. In a situation where you need to win the Petroff isn't the most suitable opening. However, the Chinese player's repertoire, particularly with Black, has no place for aggression.

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 3. ♜f3xe5 | d7-d6  |
| 4. ♜e5-f3 | ♜f6xe4 |
| 5. ♜b1-c3 | ♜e4xc3 |
| 6. d2xc3  | ♜f8-e7 |
| 7. ♜c1-e3 | ♜b8-c6 |
| 8. ♖d1-d2 | 0-0    |
| 9. 0-0-0  | ♜c6-e5 |
| 10. h2-h4 |        |

The height of fashion, but as the subsequent course of events showed Radjabov wasn't really ready to fight for a win in this encounter. In that case the more correct approach would probably have been the forcing 10. ♜xe5 dxe5 11. ♖xd8 ♜xd8 12. ♜c4, after which

Wang Yue would be faced with what for him is the usual task of defending a slightly worse ending. He'd most likely have coped with that task, but the Azerbaijan grandmaster would have had one less rival.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 10. ...    | c7-c6  |
| 11. ♖c1-b1 | ♜c8-g4 |
| 12. ♜f1-e2 | ♜e5xf3 |
| 13. ♜e2xf3 | ♜g4xf3 |
| 14. g2xf3  | ♖d8-a5 |
| 15. h4-h5  | ♖a5-f5 |
| 16. ♜d1-g1 | f7-f6  |
| 17. ♜g1-g4 |        |



- |         |         |
|---------|---------|
| 17. ... | ♜f8-f7! |
|---------|---------|

Up until this point the players were repeating a game played a few days previously. Radjabov had probably pinned his hopes on repeating events further: 17... ♖xf3 18. ♜hg1 ♜f7 19. ♜h6 ♜f8 20. ♜xg7 ♜xg7 21. ♜xg7+ ♜xg7 22. h6 ♜h8 23. ♜xg7 (one possible improvement is 23. hxg7+ ♜g8 24. ♖xd6 ♜e8 25. ♖d7 ♖e4 26. a3 ♖e7 27. ♖d4+-MF) 23... ♜g8 24. ♜xg8+ ♜xg8 25. ♖e1 Yakovenko-Gelfand, Astrakhan (round 11). Such a course of events couldn't possibly have suited Black.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 18. ♜g4-f4 | ♖f5-e6 |
| 19. ♜f4-e4 | ♖e6-f5 |
| 20. ♜e4-f4 | ♖f5-e6 |

It can't be ruled out that this was Radjabov's plan: to check if his opponent would take the poisoned pawn and otherwise force a draw.

**21. ♖f4-e4      ♜e6-d7!**

It seems it was only at this moment that Wang Yue remembered that in the bigger picture a draw didn't suit him. Of course, White's position is perfectly safe, but Black seizes the psychological initiative.

**22. c3-c4      ♙e7-f8**  
**23. ♖e4-g4      ♜d7-f5**  
**24. ♖g4-f4      ♜f5-e6**  
**25. ♖f4-e4      ♜e6-f5**  
**26. ♖e4-f4      ♜f5-e6**  
**27. ♖f4-e4      ♜e6-d7**  
**28. ♖e4-g4      b7-b6**

Objectively the position's even, but it's harder for White to play. As well as the psychological discomfort, somewhere deep in the endgame the scattered pawn structure on the kingside might tell. It's hard to display serious activity without taking risks. It seems Radjabov wasn't ready for such play.

**29. ♜d2-d3      f6-f5!**  
**30. ♖g4-d4      ♖a8-e8**  
**31. ♙e3-f4      ♖f7-f6**  
**32. ♖h1-d1      h7-h6**  
**33. b2-b3      ♖e8-e6**  
**34. ♙f4-g3**

It was worth considering the regrouping 34. ♜f1! ♜e8 35. ♜h3.

**34. ...      ♜d7-e8**

Black's no longer happy to simplify the position: 34...f4 35. ♖xf4 ♖xf4 36. ♙xf4 ♜f7 37. ♙c1 ♜xh5=.

**35. ♙g3-h4      ♖f6-f7**

**36. ♙h4-g3?!**

After 36.f4, freeing the f3-square for the queen, things would still have been absolutely harmless for White.

**36. ...      f5-f4!**  
**37. ♖d4xf4      ♖f7xf4**  
**38. ♙g3xf4      ♜e8xh5**  
**39. ♙f4-c1      ♜h5-g6**



**40. ♜d3xg6?**

Losing his way. In the endgame the presence of the distant passed h-pawn gives Black a serious edge. Queens should have been preserved: 40. ♜f1 ♜f5 41. ♖d3, although here as well Black's chances are preferable.

**40. ...      ♖e6xg6**  
**41. ♙c1-e3      ♖g6-f6**  
**42. f3-f4      ♖f6-f5**  
**43. c2-c3      d6-d5!?**

43...h5!?.

**44. c4xd5      ♖f5xd5**  
**45. ♖d1-g1**

The bishop ending is very bad for White.

**45. ...      ♙g8-f7**  
**46. ♙b1-c2      g7-g6**

The immediate attack on the f4-pawn doesn't work: 46...♙d6 47.c4 ♖f5

48. ♖d3 ♗xf4? 49. ♖e4 ♜g5 50. ♜xg5 with a draw. 46...h5 47.c4 ♜f5 48. ♖d3 also promises little.

47. c3-c4 ♜d5-d7



White's king is cut off on the d-file and 48...♗f6 is threatened – it seems as though things are really bad for White.

48. f4-f5!

After conducting the middle of the battle passively and ending up on the ropes, Radjabov puts up furious resistance. The pawn sacrifice is the best chance!

48. ... ♗gxf5  
49. a2-a4 c6-c5  
50. ♜g1-h1 ♖f7-g6  
51. ♜h1-g1+ ♖g6-f6  
52. ♜g1-h1 ♖f6-g6

There were probably more chances after 52...♜h7 53. ♖d3 h5 54. ♗f4 h4 55. ♖e3 ♖g6 56. ♜g1+ ♖f7 57. ♗b8 ♗h6+ 58. ♖e2 ♖f6. On h7 the rook would simultaneously support the passed h-pawn and defend the queenside. However, after 59.f4! the struggle would still be far from over.

53. ♜h1-g1+ ♖g6-h7  
54. ♜g1-h1 a7-a5  
55. ♜h1-h5 ♖h7-g6

56. ♜h5-h1 ♗f8-g7  
57. ♜h1-g1+ ♖g6-h7  
58. ♜g1-h1 ♗g7-f8  
59. ♜h1-h5 ♖h7-g6  
60. ♜h5-h1 ♜d7-d6  
61. ♗e3-f4 ♜d6-e6  
62. ♖c2-d2 h6-h5



63. ♜h1-e1!

63...♗h6 was threatened, and the ensuing endgame would be hopeless for White. The bishop ending, on the contrary, isn't bad at all due to the unfortunate position of the black pawns on the queenside.

63. ... ♜e6-c6  
64. ♖d2-e3 ♜c6-e6+  
65. ♖e3-d2 ♜e6-f6  
66. ♗f4-e5 ♜f6-c6  
67. ♜e1-g1+ ♖g6-f7  
68. ♖d2-e3 ♗f8-h6+  
69. f2-f4

The worst is over for White. The activity of his pieces compensates for being a pawn down. The struggle, however, went on to the very end. White's task wasn't so difficult, but there was no time to think and the result was too important for both players.

69. ... h5-h4  
70. ♜g1-h1 ♜c6-e6

- |             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| 71. ♔e3-f2  | ♙h6-g7  |
| 72. ♙e5xg7  | ♚f7xg7  |
| 73. ♚h1xh4  | ♜e6-e4  |
| 74. ♚f2-f3  | ♜e4-e1  |
| 75. ♚h4-h3  | ♜e1-b1  |
| 76. ♚h3-g3+ | ♚g7-f6  |
| 77. ♚f3-g2  | ♜b1-b2+ |
| 78. ♚g2-f1  | ♜b2-h2  |
| 79. ♚f1-g1  | ♜h2-d2  |
| 80. ♚g1-f1  | ♜d2-d4  |
| 81. ♜g3-f3  | ♚f6-g6  |
| 82. ♚f1-g2  | ♚g6-h5  |
| 83. ♚g2-h3  | ♜d4-e4  |
| 84. ♚h3-g3  | ♜e4-e1  |
| 85. ♜f3-d3  | ♜e1-g1+ |
| 86. ♚g3-h3  | ♜g1-g4  |
| 87. ♜d3-f3  | ♜g4-h4+ |
| 88. ♚h3-g3  | ♜h4-h1  |
| 89. ♜f3-e3  | ♜h1-g1+ |
| 90. ♚g3-h3  | ♜g1-f1  |
| 91. ♚h3-g3  | ♜f1-g1+ |
- 1/2-1/2

It looks as though Radjabov hadn't worked out a clear plan for what was a crucial game for him, failing to decide on which tactics to choose. In such situations Tigran Petrosian would take a draw without even considering other options. In this particular situation that might well have been the best decision. His opponent's opening choice probably only added to the uncertainty: the Petroff clearly testified to a lack of ambition from the Chinese grandmaster. The doubts and confusion in Teimour's mind almost led to defeat, but when the situation left no room for choice Radjabov became both daring and decisive. Ultimately fortune smiled on him: Gashimov didn't take his chance and lost, thereby granting his compatriot the sought-after place. It's much more difficult to understand Wang Yue. Es-

entially he simply relied on fate which, it seemed, had almost settled on him, before at the last moment preferring someone else.

Anatoly Karpov won a huge number of different tournaments over the course of his career. Nevertheless, he usually didn't strive for a clear advantage, being perfectly happy with a minimal gap ahead of his pursuers. But there were exceptions. Before the final game of the tournament in Skopje the World Champion was leading, but the East-German grandmaster Wolfgang Uhlmann was only half a point back. In those years he was one of the world's leading chess players. Having the white pieces suggested the possibility of playing for a win at no particular risk, as a draw offer at any moment would guarantee his opponent clear victory in the tournament.

[A17]

Game 79

**Wolfgang Uhlmann****Anatoly Karpov**

Skopje 1976 (15)

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. c2-c4  | ♘g8-f6 |
| 2. ♘b1-c3 | e7-e6  |
| 3. ♘g1-f3 | b7-b6  |
| 4. e2-e4  | ♙c8-b7 |
| 5. ♖d1-e2 | ♙f8-b4 |
| 6. e4-e5  | ♘f6-g8 |
| 7. d2-d4  | ♘g8-e7 |
| 8. ♖e2-d3 | d7-d5  |
| 9. e5xd6  | c7xd6  |
| 10. a2-a3 |        |

10. ♙e2 d5.

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 10. ...    | ♙b4xc3+ |
| 11. ♖d3xc3 | ♘b8-d7  |
| 12. ♙f1-e2 | ♜a8-c8  |
| 13. 0-0    | 0-0     |



**14. ♖c1-g5?!**

14.b4?! ♖a6! 15.♚b3 d5.

- |                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>14. ...</b>    | <b>h7-h6</b>  |
| <b>15. ♖g5-h4</b> | <b>♚d8-e8</b> |
| <b>16. ♖h4-g3</b> | <b>♜e7-f5</b> |
| <b>17. ♖g3-f4</b> | <b>b6-b5!</b> |
| <b>18. ♖e2-d3</b> |               |



You have to enter the complications. 18.b3 bxc4 19.bxc4 ♜b6 is completely unsatisfactory.

**18. ... ♚e8-e7!**

Karpov's note to this move is typical: 'To be fair, it should be noted that the complications arising after 18...♖xf3 19.♖xf5 ♖a8! (the best move. After 19...♖e2 it's sufficient to play 20.♞fe1) 20.♞ae1 (20.♖h3 ♞xc4 21.♚g3 ♜f6 22.♖xh6 ♜h5 23.♚h4 gxh6 24.♚xh5 ♚h7) 20...♚d8 21.♖b1 ♞xc4 weren't bad at all for Black. However, the reader should take into account the players' tournament situation... It's clear that the small but 'for life' advantage after 18...♚e7 suited me more than the possibly greater advantage linked to the complications after 18...♖xf3'.

It should be added that it was stronger for White to play 20.♖h3 ♞xc4 21.♚g3 ♜f6 22.♖xh6 ♜h5 23.♚h4 gxh6 24.♚xh5, while Karpov no doubt didn't even consider the MF's recom-

mendation 18...g5 19.♖xf5 gxf4 (19...♞xc4 20.♚a5) 20.♞fe1.

**19. ♖d3xf5 e6xf5**  
**20. ♞f1-e1**

If 20.♜d2?! bxc4 21.♚b4 ♜b6 22.♖xd6 ♚g5 23.f3 ♞fe8 White would encounter great difficulty in the middlegame. And after 20.♚e3?! ♚xe3 21.fxe3 ♞xc4 22.♖xd6 ♞e8 in the endgame.

**20. ... ♚e7-f6**

Karpov: 'At this point the East-German grandmaster offered a draw, but I asked him to make a move.' I think the World Champion's reply must have slightly amazed Uhlmann, while the continuation that followed must have really upset him. His opponent's reaction was, however, perfectly within the rules, and Black was running no risks by continuing to play. Nevertheless, few would have done the same in such a situation. Also typical was the Champion's comment off the record: 'He should have offered a draw BEFORE the game!'

**21. d4-d5**

Relatively the best decision.

- |                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>21. ...</b>    | <b>♞c8xc4</b> |
| <b>22. ♚c3xf6</b> | <b>♜d7xf6</b> |
| <b>23. ♖f4xd6</b> | <b>♞f8-c8</b> |



Black rejected 23...♖d8 24.♙e7 ♜xd5 25.♙xf6 gxf6 although there as well his edge wasn't in doubt.

#### 24. ♙d6-e5?

It was possible to exploit his opponent's inaccuracy by means of 24.♙ad1! ♜d8 (24...♙xd5 25.♙d4; 24...♙xd5 25.♙d4) 25.b3! ♜e4 26.♙c5 ♙xd5 27.♙d4 with good drawing chances.

- |              |          |
|--------------|----------|
| 24. ...      | ♙f6xd5   |
| 25. ♙f3-d4!? | f7-f6    |
| 26. ♙d4xf5   | f6xe5    |
| 27. ♙f5-d6   | ♙d5-f4!? |

27...♜8c7 28.♙xc4 bxc4 29.♜xe5 ♙f4 also wasn't bad.

- |              |        |
|--------------|--------|
| 28. ♙d6xb7   | ♙f4-d3 |
| 29. ♙b7-d6   | ♙d3xe1 |
| 30. ♙d6xc4   | ♙e1-c2 |
| 31. ♙c4-d6   | ♜c8-d8 |
| 32. ♙d6-b7   | ♜d8-d2 |
| 33. ♜a1-c1?! |        |

33.♜b1 was more stubborn.

- |             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| 33. ...     | ♙c2-d4  |
| 34. ♜c1-c8+ | ♙g8-h7  |
| 35. h2-h4   | ♜d2xb2  |
| 36. ♜c8-a8  | ♙d4-e2+ |

Also winning was 36...♜a2 37.♜xa7 b4.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 37. ♙g1-h2 | ♙e2-f4 |
|------------|--------|

37...b4! was more elegant.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 38. ♙h2-g1 | ♙f4-d3 |
| 39. ♙b7-d6 | ♙d3xf2 |
| 40. ♜a8xa7 | ♙f2-g4 |
| 41. g2-g3  | ♙g4-e3 |
| 42. ♙g1-h1 | ♙h7-g6 |
| 43. ♜a7-b7 | ♜b2-d2 |
| 44. ♙d6xb5 | ♙e3-f5 |
| 45. g3-g4  | ♙f5xh4 |

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 46. ♙h1-g1 | ♜d2-g2+ |
| 47. ♙g1-f1 | ♜g2xg4  |
| 48. ♜b7-a7 | ♙h4-f5  |
| 49. a3-a4  | h6-h5   |
| 50. a4-a5  | h5-h4   |
| 51. ♜a7-a8 | h4-h3   |
| 0-1        |         |

Uhlmann's mistake wasn't, of course, that he should have rejected the fight for first place before the game even started – any self-respecting chess player is obliged to make an attempt in such a tournament situation. He probably underestimated the risk involved in such a decision and was a little too late to offer the saving proposal. As for Karpov, it wasn't only pure chess logic that provoked him into continuing the struggle. While winning this tournament he was already thinking about the ones to come, and he needed to 'educate' his rivals appropriately.

The fate of a tournament isn't always decided in the last round, but even in that case there's usually a turning point after which the outcome of the race is hard to alter. In September 2010 the Ukrainian grandmaster Pavel Elianov was among the top-10 players in the world, while a few years before that few would have predicted such a rise for the young chess player. His rapid climb began after winning the B-Tournament in Wijk aan Zee. In what was a memorable event for him there was also a 'point of no return'.

After Round 10 nothing was yet clear in the struggle for first place, but a lot would be decided when the leaders met in the following round. As Vachier-Lagrave's opponents in the remaining rounds were clearly weaker, Pavel decided to play for a win despite having

the black pieces. A bold decision, but in professional chess boldness alone isn't enough. After all, even in order to engage in a struggle as Black you need, at the very least, to surprise your opponent at the start of the game. Elianov took the decision to play an opening that he'd never used before. It was a risky choice, especially as he simply didn't have time to study all the side-lines. He had to rely on luck, and it didn't let him down.

**[C54]** Game 80  
**Maxime Vachier-Lagrave**  
**Pavel Elianov**  
 Wijk aan Zee 2007 (11)

- |             |          |
|-------------|----------|
| 1. e2-e4    | e7-e5    |
| 2. ♖g1-f3   | ♜b8-c6!? |
| 3. ♙f1-c4?! |          |

The unusual psychological atmosphere of deciding games can sometimes give rise to strange decisions. Although they seem logical and sensible during the encounter they're hard to explain afterwards. Up until and after this game Maxime exclusively played the Spanish Opening, and after 3...a6 he'd often take on c6. It was possible to assume that Black had prepared 3...♜f6, but that continuation shouldn't have frightened a true 'Spaniard' either. However, on encountering a surprise the Frenchman didn't remain true to himself. Only Vachier-Lagrave can explain why he rejected his tried and tested weapon at such an important moment.

- |          |        |
|----------|--------|
| 3. ...   | ♙f8-c5 |
| 4. c2-c3 | ♜g8-f6 |

The good fortune in the given situation was not only that Elianov managed to

surprise his opponent, but also that he guessed the variation that occurred in the game.

## 5. d2-d4

An ancient move. In modern grandmaster play 5.d3 is seen much more often.

- |          |       |
|----------|-------|
| 5. ...   | e5xd4 |
| 6. e4-e5 |       |

In case of 6.cxd4 ♙b4+ it's long been known that it promises White nothing to play the outwardly aggressive 7.♜c3 (7.♙d2 ♙xd2+ 8.♜bxd2 d5 9.exd5 ♜xd5 is absolutely toothless) 7...♜xe4 8.0-0 ♙xc3 9.d5 ♙f6.

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 6. ...    | d7-d5  |
| 7. ♙c4-b5 | ♜f6-e4 |
| 8. c3xd4  | ♙c5-b6 |
| 9. h2-h3  |        |

Those few grandmasters who sometimes play this variation prefer 9.♙e3 0-0 10.♜c3 (10.♜bd2? ♜xd2 11.♙xd2 has also been seen, but certainly can't be recommended).

- |        |          |
|--------|----------|
| 9. ... | ♙c8-d7!? |
|--------|----------|

Creating the threat of 10...♜xe5 and simultaneously preventing the idea of capturing on c6 and doubling pawns.




## 10. ♙b5-d3?!



It was probably more accurate to play 10.♙a4 or 10.♙e2.

**10. ... ♞c6-b4!**

Allowing Black to seize the initiative.

11. d3-e2      c7-c5!  
12. c1-e3      c5xd4  
13. f3xd4

If 13. ♗xd4 then 13... ♘c6! would gain in strength...

13. ... ♖b4-c6  
14. 0-0 ♘c6xe5  
15. ♙d1-b3 ♘e5-c4!  
16. ♙e2xc4 d5xc4  
17. ♙b3xc4 0-0  
18. ♖f1-d1 ♙a8-c8  
19. ♙c4-d3 ♖f8-e8  
20. ♘b1-d2 ♙d7-f5!  
21. ♙d3-b5

After a series of almost forced moves the character of the position has finally been determined: White is forced to fight for equality.

21. ... ♘e4-d6  
22. ♔b5-d5 ♙f5-g6  
23. ♖a1-c1 ♜c8xc1  
24. ♜d1xc1



**24. ... h7-h6!**

Black has achieved a lot, but White's position is still sufficiently solid. Pro-

phylaxis is always useful in such situations!

**25. ♘d4-c2?!**

And here's the consequence. In such positions parrying direct threats and finding only moves is much easier than finding yourself in limbo.

White's desire to simplify the position is understandable, but it only adds to his problems. It would have been better to prepare the idea of exchanging the dark-squared bishops with 25.♖e1.

**25. ... ♔d8-c7!**

Weaker is 25...♙f6 26.♙d4. But not bad at all is 25...♜f5 26.♙xd8 ♙xd8 as after 27.♙xa7? there's the strong 27...♙g5 True, in that case queens would be exchanged, which would somewhat ease White's task.

26.  e3xb6?

Essentially the decisive mistake. Much more stubborn was 26. ♘f1:

A) 26...♙xc2 would let the edge slip:  
27.♙xb6 ♖xb6 (27...axb6 28.♘e3)  
28.♖xc2;

B) 26...♘f5! 27.♔d2.

26. ... ♔c7xb6

**27. b2-b3?**

27. ♖e3 ♔xb2 couldn't have appealed to White, but there was no longer anything better.

**27. ... ♖e8-c8**

**28. ♖d2-c4      ♖d6xc4**

**29. c2-e3**

29.bxc4 xc2.

29. ...  c4-d6  
0-1

The relative ease of the victory made it no less significant. A qualifying place in the first super-tournament of his life was a worthy reward for Elianov's bravery.

Wijk aan Zee also played a role in my tournament life. I once found myself in a situation very similar to the one described above: everything was also decided in the 11th round, although in my case it was also the last. My fierce rival in the struggle for first place was the young American player Patrick Wolff. By the last round we were a long way ahead of the remaining participants, but the fate of the main prize – a place in the A-Tournament – was still unclear. Wolff was going to play the tournament outsider, so I could only rely on myself.

[A57]

Game 81

**Viktor Moskalenko**  
**Vladimir Tukmakov**

Wijk aan Zee 1992 (11)

- |          |        |
|----------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4 | ♘g8-f6 |
| 2. c2-c4 | c7-c5  |
| 3. d4-d5 | b7-b5  |
| 4. c4xb5 | a7-a6  |
| 5. b5-b6 |        |

Not the most principled reply, but a perfectly reasonable one. Moskalenko regularly played this way and I also had some experience playing it as White.

- |        |        |
|--------|--------|
| 5. ... | ♚d8xb6 |
|--------|--------|

5...d6 6.♘c3 ♘bd7 7.e4 g6 8.a4 ♘xb6 9.a5 ♘bd7 10.f4 ♙g7 11.♙c4 0-0 12.♘f3 with better prospects for White, was seen in the game Tukmakov-J. Polgar, Amsterdam 1990.

- |           |       |
|-----------|-------|
| 6. ♘b1-c3 | g7-g6 |
|-----------|-------|

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 7. e2-e4   | d7-d6  |
| 8. ♘g1-f3  | ♙f8-g7 |
| 9. ♙f1-e2  | 0-0    |
| 10. ♘f3-d2 | ♘b8-d7 |
| 11. 0-0    | ♚b6-c7 |

11...♘e5 12.♙h1 (12.f4 c4+ 13.♙h1 ♘d3) 12...g5 13.♘c4 ♘xc4 14.♙xc4 g4 15.♚b1 (Tukmakov-Plachetka, Ostend 1990) is less solid for Black.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 12. a2-a4  | ♚a8-b8 |
| 13. a4-a5  | ♘f6-e8 |
| 14. ♘d2-c4 | ♘d7-e5 |
| 15. f2-f4  |        |

15.♘b6 was worth considering.

- |            |          |
|------------|----------|
| 15. ...    | ♘e5xc4   |
| 16. ♙e2xc4 | ♚c7-a7!? |

Starting to regroup the pieces via the transit point on b5. A fundamentally different idea is connected to 16...♙d4+ 17.♙h1 ♘f6.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 17. ♚d1-e2 | ♘e8-c7 |
| 18. ♙c1-e3 | ♙c8-d7 |



19. e4-e5!

White responds to Black's activity on the flank in textbook manner – with a counterstrike in the centre.

- |         |        |
|---------|--------|
| 19. ... | ♚b8-b4 |
|---------|--------|

Not 19...dxe5? because of 20.♚f2.

20. b2-b3      ♔d7-b5!?  
21. ♖a1-d1      ♕a7-b7

26. ...      ♖b7-c6  
27. ♖d1-d2      f7-f5!

The exchange sacrifice deserved serious consideration: 21...♖xb3 22.♗xb5 ♖xb5 23.♗xb5 axb5.

22. e5xd6?!

White could have forced it, and in a form that was more advantageous for him: 22.♗d2! ♖xb3 23.♗xb5 ♖xb5 24.♗c3!.

22. ...      e7xd6  
23. ♗c3-e4      ♗c7xd5!?

Provoking an immediate crisis. Also not bad was the calm 23...♗e8.

24. ♗e4xd6?!

Now play goes in Black's favour. After the composed 24.♗d2! White would have avoided any serious difficulties. For example: 24...♗xc4 25.bxc4 ♗d4+ 26.♗h1 ♗e3! 27.♗xd6 ♖c6 28.♗xe3 ♖xd6 29.♗xd4 cxd4 30.f5.

24. ...      ♗b5xc4  
25. b3xc4      ♗d5-c3



26. ♖e2-d3?

After this move the game goes rapidly downhill for White. Far more chances of survival would have been retained by entering an endgame: 26.♗xb7 ♗xe2+ 27.♗f2 ♗c3 28.♖d7 ♖xc4 29.♗f3!.

Eradicating White's counterplay connected to f4-f5. Moreover, the d6-knight has no moves and winning it is only a question of time.

28. ♖f1-e1      ♖b4-b8

It was premature to play 28...♖d8 because of 29.♗xf5.

29. ♗e3-f2      ♖f8-d8!

There's no satisfactory defence to the threat of 30...♗e4.

30. ♗d6xf5      g6xf5  
31. ♖d3xd8+      ♖b8xd8  
32. ♖d2xd8+      ♗g8-f7

Black has an absolutely won position, but deciding games have their own drama. Moreover, serious time trouble was becoming a factor.

33. ♗f2-h4      ♗g7-d4+  
34. ♗g1-h1      ♗c3-e4  
35. ♖e1-b1      ♗e4-f2+?

There was no need whatsoever to exchange the beautiful knight. Instead of that almost any other sensible move would have won.

36. ♗h4xf2      ♗d4xf2  
37. ♖d8-d5      ♗f2-d4?

Yet another mistake that significantly complicates Black's task. Sufficient for victory were the prophylactic 37...♗g7, the passive 37...♖c8, and the active 37...♖a4.

38. h2-h3?

Returning the favour. After the natural 38.♖xf5+ it's no good to play 38...♗e7? 39.♖e1+ ♗d7 (and

39...♔d6? actually loses: 40.♖d5+ ♕c7  
41.♗e7+ ♕c8 42.♗g5!) 40.♗f7+ ♕d8  
41.♗f8+ with a draw. Correct would be  
38...♕g7 or 38...♕g8 with winning  
chances.

**38. ... ♗d4-f6**

Better was 38...♗c7 39.♗xf5+ ♕e6  
40.g4 ♗xa5.

**39. ♖b1-b6 ♗c6-c8**

**40. ♖b6-d6 h7-h5**

40...♗b8!.

**41. ♖d6-d7+**



**41. ... ♕f7-g6?**

Having rushed past the time control on  
inertia Black almost lets the win slip.

**42. ♖d7-d6?**

After 42.♖5d6! Black would have had  
to settle for a draw. There's no defence  
against doubling rooks on the sixth  
rank.

**42. ... ♕g6-f7**

**43. ♖d6-d7+ ♕f7-e8!**

This was how I should have played on  
move 41!

**44. ♖d7-d6 ♗f6-d4**

**45. ♖d6-b6 ♕e8-f7**

**46. ♕h1-h2 h5-h4!**

Black's position is winning again. This  
time round there were no more adven-  
tures.

**47. g2-g3 h4xg3+**

**48. ♕h2xg3 ♗d4-f6**

**49. ♕g3-f3 ♗f6-d8**

**50. ♖b6-d6 ♗d8xa5**

**51. h3-h4 ♗a5-c3**

**52. ♖d6-d8 ♗c8-c6**

**53. ♖d8-d6 ♗c6-a4**

**54. ♖d5xf5+ ♕f7-e7**

**55. ♖d6-d5 ♗c3-d4**

**56. ♗f5-g5 ♗a4xc4**

**57. h4-h5 ♗c4-f1+**

**58. ♕f3-g3 ♗f1-f2+**

0-1

Of course the pure chess content of that  
game was greatly inferior to its sporting  
significance, but that's often the case in  
such encounters. Achieving an advan-  
tage takes up so much time and emo-  
tion (it's particularly hard with Black),  
that at the deciding moment concentra-  
tion sometimes fails you. That's some-  
thing it's also essential to take into ac-  
count during preparation.

In any case, the win guaranteed me first  
place, as even if we shared the same  
number of points the tiebreakers were  
in my favour. It wasn't, however, neces-  
sary to calculate the coefficients – Wolff  
didn't manage to win. Buoyed up by  
that victory I played exceptionally well  
throughout the whole year.

The next memorable encounter took  
place a few months later. I came into the  
last round of the open in Palma de  
Mallorca half a point behind the leader  
– a young and back then little-known  
Veselin Topalov. Everyone knows that  
Swiss tournaments have their own laws.  
The winner takes it all, and sharing sec-

ond place, as a rule, brings neither money nor glory.

So the decision to take a risk wasn't one I had any great hesitations about. Moreover, the Bulgarian's now famous surname meant nothing to me at the time.

[D86]

Game 82

**Veselin Topalov****Vladimir Tukmakov**

Palma de Mallorca 1992 (9)

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4   | ♘g8-f6 |
| 2. c2-c4   | g7-g6  |
| 3. ♞b1-c3  | d7-d5  |
| 4. c4xd5   | ♞f6xd5 |
| 5. e2-e4   | ♞d5xc3 |
| 6. b2xc3   | ♙f8-g7 |
| 7. ♙f1-c4  | 0-0    |
| 8. ♞g1-e2  | ♞b8-c6 |
| 9. 0-0     | e7-e5  |
| 10. ♙c1-a3 |        |

When combined with the following sacrifice this is the most principled continuation, but also seen here more than once were 10. ♙e3 and also 10. d5 ♞a5 11. ♙d3.

- |              |        |
|--------------|--------|
| 10. ...      | ♙f8-e8 |
| 11. ♙c4xf7+! |        |

A strange decision, at first glance: White rushes into complications when a win was essential, first and foremost, for his opponent. But for now the game is only following known models.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 11. ...     | ♞g8xf7 |
| 12. ♙d1-b3+ |        |

This position had occurred twice in my games, which was something Topalov was undoubtedly aware of. The way events developed in them would have suited his tournament situation perfectly.



12. ...

♙f7-f6!?

Here's how the games mentioned went: 12... ♙e6 13. d5 ♞a5 14. dxe6+ ♙xe6 15. ♙a4 c6 16. ♙ad1 ♙c7 17. c4! (stronger than 17. ♙d3 ♞g8 18. c4 ♙f8 19. ♙fd1 ♙f6 20. f3 ♙xa3 21. ♙xa3 b6= Volke-Tukmakov, Groningen 1990) 17... ♞g8 18. ♞c1 ♙f8 19. ♙xf8 (even stronger was 19. ♙b2) 19... ♙xf8 20. ♞b3 ♞xb3 21. axb3 b6 Black has to fight for equality.

Analysing the last game I had a quick look at the king move. It seemed extremely dangerous, but I couldn't find a direct refutation. It was hard to imagine a better chance to test out this experimental idea.

Taking a deep breath of air, I dived into the unknown!

### 13. f2-f4

The most natural continuation of the attack, which didn't take my young opponent much time. I also didn't look at any other options during preparation. However, the MF holds a different opinion: 13. ♙ad1!:

A) A good impression isn't made by the variation 13... exd4 14. ♞xd4 ♙d7 (even worse is 14... ♙d7 15. ♞xc6 bxc6 16. ♙d3) 15. ♞b5 ♞a5 after which good for White are both 16. ♙a4, and 16. ♙xd7;



B) 13...♔d7 14.dxe5+! ♖xe5 (14...♘xe5 15.f4 is very bad for Black) 15.f4! ♖xe4 16.♘g3 ♖e3 17.f5! with a winning attack for White. Therefore the dubious nature of Black's opening experiment can be considered proven.

13. ... ♔g7-h6



14. f4xe5+

Topalov made this move quickly, although White had at least two tempting options at his disposal: the first of them was 14.dxe5+!? ♘g7 15.f5!? (15.♖ad1 ♖h4!) 15...♘xe5 16.f6+ ♘h8 17.♖ad1 ♔d7 18.f7 ♖f8 19.♖xb7 (Black's task is simplified by 19.♔xf8 ♖xf8 20.♖xb7 ♖c5+ 21.♘h1 ♖f8) 19...♔e3+ 20.♘h1 c5 21.c4 ♖b8 22.♖xa7 (clearly in Black's favour is 22.♔b2 ♔d4 23.♔xd4 cxd4 24.♖xa7 ♖b6!) 22...♖xf7! (a sacrifice in response, resolving all the problems) 23.♖xf7 ♘xf7 24.♖xd7 ♖xd7 25.♖xd7 ♖b1+ 26.♔c1 ♘g5 and it's only White who can have problems.

It looks tempting to play 14.d5!? ♘a5 15.fxe5+ ♘g7 16.♖a4 with undoubted compensation for the piece. It's not so easy for Black to choose the best of the numerous replies – 16...b6; 16...c6; 16...♔g4; 16...♔e3+.

14. ... ♘f6-g7



15. ♖f1-f6?!

This looks energetic, but it actually reduces the pace of the attack. White's planning to double rooks on the f-file, and if 15...♘h8 there's the nice idea of 16.♔c1 ♔g7 17.♔g5.

The other rook attack 15.♖f7+? is even weaker: after 15...♘h8 16...♔e6 is threatened, and the superficial activity turns out to be a loss of time.

Much more dangerous was 15.♖f7+ ♘h8 16.♘f4 so that after 16...♔g4 the pressure could again be upped with 17.♖f2.

But the most unpleasant move for Black was probably the paradoxical 15.♔c1!, exchanging Black's main defender. After 15...♔xc1 16.♖axc1 ♘a5 17.♖f7+ ♘h8 (the best move might be 17...♘h6 18.d5!? ♔g4 19.♘d4 ♖f8 20.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 21.♖xf8 ♖xf8 22.e6 and now only the decisive 22...c5! saves Black from serious problems) 18.♘f4 White has a dangerous attack.

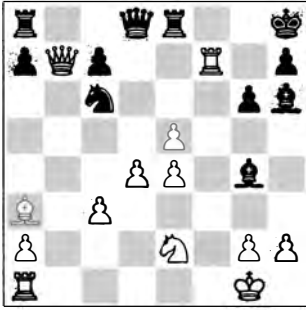
15. ... ♔c8-g4!

16. ♖f6-f7+

16.♖xb7 ♘xe5 17.dxe5 ♔e3+ 18.♘h1 ♔xe2 isn't comforting for White at all.

16. ... ♘g7-h8

17. ♖b3xb7



17. ... ♖c6xe5?!

A move that was asking to be played, but not the strongest reply. It was correct to reject 17...♙xe2? 18.♚xc6! ♚h4 19.♙e7! but unfortunately Black failed to discover the subtle 17...♙g8! 18.♚xc7 ♖a5 19.♚d5+ ♚xd5 20.exd5 ♙xe2 and the black pieces are clearly stronger than the white pawns.

18. ♚f7xc7?!

There were more chances of defending successfully after 18.dxe5! ♙e3+ 19.♙h1 ♚b8 20.♚a6 ♚b6 21.♚c4 ♙e6 22.♚xc7 ♙xf7 23.♚xf7.

18. ... ♙e5-d7  
19. ♙a3-d6 ♚a8-c8?!

Missing the moment to switch to a decisive counterattack: 19...♚b8! 20.♚xa7 ♚b2 21.♙f4 ♚h4! 22.d5 (22.♚f1 ♙xf4 23.♙xf4 ♙f3!) 22...♚xe4 23.♚f1 ♚b1!.

20. ♙e2-g3! ♚c8xc7  
21. ♙d6xc7 ♚d8-g5  
22. h2-h3

Admirable composure! The king gets a hiding place on h2 and the struggle goes on.

22. ... ♚g5-e3+  
23. ♙g1-h2 ♚e3xc3

24. ♚a1-f1 ♙g4-e6  
25. d4-d5 ♙e6-g8  
26. ♙c7-f4?!

The exchange of dark-squared bishops significantly eases Black's task. It was wrong to ignore the pawn: 26.♚xa7 ♙g7 27.♙a5 ♚c8 28.♙d2 and although Black's chances are greater everything's still to play for.

26. ... ♙h6xf4  
27. ♚f1xf4 ♙d7-f6!  
28. ♚b7-a6 ♚h8-g7  
29. ♚a6xa7+ ♙g8-f7  
30. ♙g3-e2?

The last mistake, although even after the more stubborn 30.♚f2 ♚e5 Black's win was only a question of time.

30. ... ♚c3-e5  
31. ♙h2-g1 ♚e8-e7  
32. ♚a7-d4 ♚e5xd4+  
33. ♙e2xd4 ♚e7xe4

The endgame is totally hopeless for White.

0-1

In that game a dangerous opening experiment ended in a total creative and sporting success, but such a balancing act on the edge of the abyss isn't for everyone. In any case, I didn't repeat it.

Among all the possible formats and time controls in modern chess life, each of which has its own specific features, knockout tournaments stand out. The mini-matches in them consist, as a rule, of only two games, and correspondingly every second encounter inevitably becomes a deciding game. Moreover, when players of roughly equal class meet (and not only in such cases) a 1:1 scoreline is

very probable, in which case the format of the combat is dramatically altered. The players have to compete in both rapid chess and blitz. Furthermore, previously all of those dramatic transformations took place on the same day, immediately after the end of the second game at the normal time control. Those regulations were first tried by the organisers in Tilburg, who had probably become a little bored of the run-of-the-mill solid super-tournaments.

At one of the first such tournaments a critical situation arose for your author. After losing with white the day before against Smbat Lputian I was faced with the necessity of winning, at all costs, with black. The more I thought about the upcoming game the more miserable I became. All of the opening variations in my normal repertoire seemed unsuitable for the decisive battle. Looking for something unusual I accidentally came across a somewhat outlandish but interesting idea. There simply wasn't time to dig around anymore in the databases, so the find was given the green light.

[A43]

**Smbat Lputian**

**Vladimir Tukmakov**

Tilburg 1994 (3)

Game 83

1. d2-d4

c7-c5

2. d4-d5

f7-f5!?!/?!/

What appeared on the board was a bizarre mixture of the Benoni and the Dutch Defences – a dubious, and even life-threatening, cocktail. But in the situation I found myself in there wasn't time for good taste.

3. ♖b1-c3

♙g8-f6

4. ♙c1-g5

After 4.g3 g6 5.♙g2 ♙g7 the game would have taken on the features of the Leningrad Variation of the Dutch Defence.

4. ...

♙d8-b6!?

5. ♙g5xf6

The game that served as my 'source of inspiration' when choosing this variation went: 5.♙d2 h6?! 6.♙xf6 ♙xf6 7.0-0-0 with an obvious edge for White, Alburt-Levitt, New York 1994. I was ready to go out on a limb: 5...♙xb2!? 6.♙b1 ♙a3. A little slow, but perfectly possible is 5.♙b1.

5. ...

♙b6xf6

It was also worth considering 5...exf6.

6. e2-e3

g7-g6

6...d6 is a little more accurate.



7. ♙f1-c4

I was more worried about 7.d6! exd6 (7...♙xd6 8.♙xd6 exd6 9.♙b5 ♙d8 10.0-0-0 couldn't have suited Black because of sporting considerations) 8.♙f3 ♙c6 9.♙c4.

7. ...

d7-d6

8. ♙g1-e2

♙b8-d7

9. ♖e2-f4      ♜d7-e5  
10. ♔d1-e2!?

10. ♖b5+ ♕f7 isn't dangerous for Black.

A very unusual position would have arisen after 10. ♖e2 g5!? 11. ♜h5 ♔f7 12. ♜b5 ♕d8, but any deviation from a state of balance suited me in this game.

10. ...      ♜f8-h6!?

So that after 10... ♜g7 there was no need to think about the consequences of 11.h4.

11. h2-h4      0-0  
12. a2-a4      ♜e5xc4

If 12... ♜d7 there's the unpleasant 13. ♖b5.

13. ♔e2xc4      b7-b6  
14. g2-g3

Lputian's play is restrained. Sharper was 14.h5!? g5 15. ♜e6 ♖xe6 16.dxe6 f4 with mutual chances.

14. ...      a7-a6  
15. 0-0      ♜c8-d7



A complex position with chances for both players has arisen – precisely what Black was aiming for when choosing this exotic opening.

16. ♜f4-e6      ♜f8-b8

16... ♖xe6?! 17.dxe6 favours White.

17. ♜f1-b1

Understandable caution. 17. ♜c7 ♜a7 18. ♜xa6? ♜ba8 is very bad. White also couldn't be happy about 17.e4?! b5 18.axb5 axb5 19. ♜xa8 ♜xa8 20. ♜xb5 ♔xb2; 17.f4?! b5!.

17. ...      ♕g8-f7  
18. ♜e6-f4      ♜b8-b7!

Preparing ...b6-b5. The immediate 18...b5!? would provoke a premature crisis: 19.axb5 ♖xb5! (stronger than 19...axb5 20. ♜xa8 ♜xa8 21. ♜xb5) 20. ♔a2! (20. ♜xb5?! axb5 21. ♜xa8 bxc4 22. ♜xb8 ♖xf4 23.exf4 ♔d4 would have suited Black perfectly) 20... ♜d7 21. ♔a5 with an initiative for White.

19. ♔c4-d3      ♜b7-c7  
20. ♜a1-a2      ♜h6-g7  
21. ♕g1-g2      ♜c7-c8  
22. ♔d3-e2      ♜g7-h6

I didn't immediately manage to stumble on the right plan: 22... ♕g8!? with ... ♔f7 and ... ♜e5 to follow.

23. ♜b1-a1      ♕f7-g8!  
24. ♜a2-a3      ♔f6-f7  
25. ♕g2-g1

White has even greater problems finding a good plan.

25. ...      ♜h6-g7  
26. ♜a3-b3      ♜c8-b8  
27. ♔e2-c4      ♜g7-e5!?

Clearly premature is 27... ♜xc3 28. ♔xc3 b5 29.axb5 axb5 30. ♜xa8 ♜xa8 31. ♜a3=.

**28. ♖c4-e2?! ♜a8-a7?!**

Both players, lulled by the monotonous manoeuvring, overlooked the possibility of dramatically altering the character of the position: 28...b5! 29.axb5 axb5 30.♞xa8 ♞xa8 31.♝xb5 ♝xf4 32.exf4 ♞a1+ 33.♔g2 ♖xd5+ with a clear edge for Black.

**29. ♔g1-g2 h7-h6**

Preparing to open a second front.

**30. ♞a1-h1 ♜a7-a8!?**

30...g5?! 31.hxg5 hxg5 32.♝e6 would have given White the long-awaited counterplay.

**31. ♖e2-d3**



**31. ... ♝e5xc3?!**

A crucial decision! Fearing the advantage in the position arising after 31...b5 32.axb5 axb5 33.♝xb5 ♝xf4 34.exf4 ♝xb5 35.♞xb5 ♞xb5 36.♖xb5 ♖xd5+ 37.♔h2 might not be sufficient to win, Black picks up a dubious pawn.

**32. ♜b3xc3 ♝d7xa4**

**33. g3-g4?!**

It was much more dangerous to play 33.e4!. The e-file is more important for the attack than the g-file!

**33. ... ♙a4-b5**

Both players were in time trouble, so it wasn't easy to choose correctly. I didn't want to allow the cramping 34.g5 (for instance, after 33...♞f8). On the other hand, after the exchange of queens with 33...fxg4 34.♖xg6+ ♖xg6 35.♝xg6 ♔f7 36.h5! White also has serious counterplay.

**34. ♖d3-d1 f5xg4**

**35. ♖d1xg4 ♔g8-h7**

**36. ♜h1-h3 ♜b8-g8**



**37. ♝f4-e6?**

Stronger was 37.e4! taking the f5-square under control and freeing the third rank to redeploy the rooks. In that case there would still be everything to play for. After the move in the game the advantage passes to Black once and for all.

**37. ... ♖f7-f5!**

**38. ♖g4xf5**

38.♖f3 ♙e2! forces an even better version of the queen exchange.

**38. ... g6xf5+**

**39. ♔g2-f3 ♜g8-g4!**

**40. ♝e6-f4 ♝b5-d7**

Time trouble is over and the game becomes a matter of converting the advantage.

- |            |                |               |
|------------|----------------|---------------|
| <b>41.</b> | <b>♖c3-a3</b>  | <b>a6-a5</b>  |
| <b>42.</b> | <b>c2-c4</b>   | <b>♔h7-g7</b> |
| <b>43.</b> | <b>♗h3-h1?</b> |               |

The final mistake. More stubborn was 43. ♗g3.

- |            |               |                |
|------------|---------------|----------------|
| <b>43.</b> | <b>...</b>    | <b>e7-e5!</b>  |
| <b>44.</b> | <b>d5xe6</b>  | <b>♙d7-c6+</b> |
| <b>45.</b> | <b>♙f4-d5</b> | <b>♗g4xc4</b>  |

The rest is quite straightforward.

- |            |                |                |
|------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>46.</b> | <b>♗a3-d3</b>  | <b>♗a8-e8</b>  |
| <b>47.</b> | <b>♗h1-g1+</b> | <b>♔g7-h7!</b> |

47... ♙f8? 48. ♗g6.

- |            |               |               |
|------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>48.</b> | <b>♔f3-e2</b> | <b>♗e8xe6</b> |
| <b>49.</b> | <b>♔e2-d2</b> | <b>♗c4xh4</b> |
| <b>50.</b> | <b>♙d5-f4</b> | <b>♗e6-f6</b> |
| <b>51.</b> | <b>♔d2-c3</b> | <b>0-1</b>    |

In rapid chess the situation was a carbon copy, although this time I was the one leading after winning with black. What strategy Lputian would have chosen if he'd had time to consider is something you can only guess at. As it was, without further ado he played a variation from his usual repertoire and I was prepared for it. However, that didn't help so much. In my desire to reach the safety of a draw as soon as possible I clearly tried too hard and ended up losing. The outcome of the battle only turned in my favour in blitz. After such swings I was completely drained – the twists and turns of this dramatic encounter had been too exhausting.

In the next match against Bareev I barely survived in 'normal time', but I had nothing left for anything after that. My own experience confirmed the truth of Anand's statement that 'the difference between a good performance

and an extraordinary achievement should often be sought not in the technical aspects of play but in sporting qualities like will-power and resistance under pressure'.

It was sporting qualities that largely determined the winners of the knockout championships, which for many years squeezed out the traditional World Championship system. The purely chess aspects ceased to play a decisive role in these battles for survival. A stable nervous system and the capacity to function normally under conditions of constant mental pressure acquired much greater significance. The ability to quickly forget the previous encounter, however dramatic it had been, began to play a much more important role than before. Moreover, far from all players, however outstanding, relished the gathering together under one roof of such different chess disciplines as classical chess, rapid and blitz.

In the 2005 World Cup one of the best players of the last twenty years, Vasily Ivanchuk, found himself in a difficult situation. He'd lost the first game, so he needed to take his revenge in the second.

**[D12]**  
**Vasily Ivanchuk**  
**Ivan Cheparinov**

Game 84

Khanty-Mansiysk 2005 (2.2)

- |           |               |               |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>d2-d4</b>  | <b>d7-d5</b>  |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>c2-c4</b>  | <b>c7-c6</b>  |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>♙g1-f3</b> | <b>♙g8-f6</b> |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>e2-e3</b>  | <b>♙c8-f5</b> |
| <b>5.</b> | <b>♙b1-c3</b> | <b>e7-e6</b>  |
| <b>6.</b> | <b>♙f3-h4</b> | <b>♙f5-g6</b> |
| <b>7.</b> | <b>♙h4xg6</b> | <b>h7xg6</b>  |
| <b>8.</b> | <b>♙c1-d2</b> | <b>♙b8-d7</b> |

9. ♖a1-c1      ♙f8-d6  
10. a2-a3      a7-a6  
11. c4-c5?!

Releasing the tension in the centre plays into Black's hands. Preferable were 11.h3 or 11.g3.

11. ...      ♙d6-c7

Capturing on h2, which is probably what Vasily had been counting on, is too risky for Black – particularly in the given situation.

12. f2-f4      g6-g5!  
13. ♙f1-d3

In contrast, 13.fxg5 ♗h5 is dangerous for White.

13. ...      g5xf4  
14. e3xf4



It seems as though White has won the opening duel: on the plus side he has a space advantage, the bishop pair, and Black's counterplay connected to ...e6-e5 has been reliably prevented... However, Cheparinov's brilliant reply fundamentally alters the situation on the board.

14. ...      ♗f6-e4!!  
15. ♗c3xe4

No better is 15.♙xe4 dxe4 16.♖b3 (the variation 16.♗xe4 ♗f6 17.♗xf6+

♖xf6 18.♙e3 0-0-0 is absolutely harmless for Black), trying to complicate Black's task: 16...♖h4+! 17.g3 ♖h3 18.♖xb7 ♖g2 19.♖xa8+ ♗b8 20.♖f1 ♖xh2 21.♖c2 e3 22.♙xe3 ♖xc2 and although White somehow holds on after 23.♖b7 that's little consolation.

15. ...      d5xe4  
16. ♙d3xe4      ♗d7-f6

The obvious move, although it was even stronger to play 16...♖f6! 17.♖c4 ♙xf4 18.g3 ♙xd2+ 19.♖xd2 0-0-0 with comfortable equality.

17. ♖d1-f3      ♗f6xe4

17...♖xd4? 18.♙xc6+.

18. ♖f3xe4      ♖d8-d5

After 18...♖h4+?! 19.g3 ♖h3 20.♗d1! the white king safely retreats to the queenside, while the extra pawn remains.

19. ♖e4xd5      e6xd5  
20. ♗e1-f2      f7-f5  
21. ♖c1-c3      ♗e8-f7  
22. h2-h3      g7-g6  
23. ♖c3-b3      ♖a8-b8  
24. ♖h1-e1      ♖h8-e8



Black has almost achieved his goal – it's not clear how his defensive ramparts can be broken down.

**25. ♖e1-e5!**

An almost forced sacrifice. After 25.♖xe8 ♗xe8 it's not clear how White can convert his material advantage. However, in the altered situation it also seems as though Black should hold the position without difficulty.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 25. ...     | ♙c7xe5 |
| 26. f4xe5   | ♖e8-e7 |
| 27. h3-h4   | ♖b8-h8 |
| 28. g2-g3   | ♗f7-e6 |
| 29. ♗f2-e2  | ♖e7-f7 |
| 30. ♙d2-f4  | ♖h8-b8 |
| 31. ♖b3-b6  | ♖b8-a8 |
| 32. ♗e2-d3  | a6-a5  |
| 33. ♙f4-g5  | ♖a8-a6 |
| 34. ♖b6-b3  | a5-a4  |
| 35. ♖b3-b4  | ♖f7-d7 |
| 36. ♗d3-e3  | ♖d7-h7 |
| 37. ♗e3-f4  | ♖a6-a7 |
| 38. ♙g5-f6  | ♖a7-a8 |
| 39. ♗f4-g5  | ♖h7-f7 |
| 40. b2-b3   | a4xb3  |
| 41. ♖b4xb3  | ♖a8-a4 |
| 42. ♖b3-d3  | ♖a4-a8 |
| 43. ♖d3-f3! |        |

Resisting the temptation of 43.♗xg6 ♖g8+ 44.♗h6 ♖g4 45.♙g5 ♖f8 46.♗g7 ♖a8 after which White is unable to improve.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 43. ...    | ♖a8-a4 |
| 44. ♖f3-d3 | ♖a4-a8 |
| 45. g3-g4  | f5xg4  |
| 46. ♗g5xg4 | ♖f7-h7 |

For Black as well it's dangerous to transform the position 46...♖xf6 47.exf6 ♗xf6 48.♖f3+ ♗g7 49.♗g5 ♖a4 50.♖b3 ♖xd4 51.♖xb7+ ♗f8 52.♖c7±.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 47. ♗g4-g5 | ♖a8-g8 |
|------------|--------|

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 48. ♖d3-b3 | ♖h7-h5+ |
| 49. ♗g5-g4 | ♖h5-h7  |
| 50. a3-a4  | ♖g8-a8  |
| 51. ♖b3-b4 | ♖h7-d7  |
| 52. ♗g4-g5 | ♗e6-f7  |
| 53. ♗g5-h6 | ♖a8-g8  |
| 54. ♖b4-b3 | ♖d7-c7  |
| 55. a4-a5  | ♗f7-e6  |
| 56. ♖b3-g3 | ♗e6-f7  |
| 57. ♖g3-g2 | ♖c7-d7  |
| 58. ♖g2-a2 | ♗f7-e6  |
| 59. a5-a6  | b7xa6   |
| 60. ♖a2xa6 | ♖d7-c7  |
| 61. ♗h6-g5 | ♗e6-f7  |

It seems as though White has kept playing purely through inertia. However, he finds an amazing means of improving his position.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 62. h4-h5!  | g6xh5+ |
| 63. ♗g5-f5! | ♖g8-e8 |



Black's last move was forced – 64.e6+ was threatened. White of course has full compensation for the exchange: all his pieces occupy dominant positions. Moreover, Black has serious problems finding moves. But will it be possible to exploit that circumstance given the limited material remaining?

**64. ♖a6-a2?**

A tragic mistake! After displaying finely-honed technique and stunning



endurance, Ivanchuk stumbles one step away from a deserved victory: 64.♖b6!!.. Vasily had been on the verge of playing this, but at the last moment his hand made another 'more cultured' move all by itself:

A) 64...♖e6 would be followed by the decisive 65.♖b1! ♖e8 (65...♖xf6+ 66.exf6 ♖a7 67.♖g1 is hopeless) 66.♖g1 ♖f8 (66...♖g8 67.e6+ ♖f8 68.e7+) 67.e6 ♖h7 68.♙e5 ♖ee7 69.♙d6 and Black's absolutely helpless;

B) 64...♖f8. It unexpectedly turns out that Black's in zugzwang. After 65.e6 ♖h7 66.♙h4! the total domination of the white pieces decides matters: 66...♖c8 67.♖e5 ♖h6 68.♙f6 ♖h7 (68...h4 69.♖b7) 69.♖b3 h4 70.♖h3 ♖h6 71.♙xh4 ♖e8 72.♖g3 and White wins. Now, however, Black is just in time.

64. ... ♖c7-b7  
65. ♖a2-g2 ♖f7-f8  
66. ♖g2-h2

66.e6 ♖b1 67.e7+ ♖xe7 68.♙xe7+ ♖xe7 69.♖g7+ ♖d8 70.♖e6 ♖f1!=.

66. ... ♖b7-b1  
67. ♖h2xh5 ♖b1-f1+  
68. ♖f5-g6 ♖f1-g1+  
69. ♙f6-g5 ♖f8-g8  
70. ♖g6-f5 ♖g1-f1+  
71. ♖f5-g4 ♖f1-g1+  
1/2-1/2

In this game Ivanchuk demonstrated technique, endurance and patience, but only up until the moment when his advantage finally became decisive. The proximity of the desired win turned out to be too great a load on his nervous system. At the critical moment even losing concentration for a second proved fatal.

Vasily found himself in an even more difficult situation in the 2009 World Cup. The first game against the young Philippine So developed in a very interesting manner, but at some point White overestimated his chances, rejected a perpetual check and lost. The task of winning 'on demand' with black looked difficult, but achievable, particularly taking into account his opponent's lack of experience. However, So approached the game with a wisdom that belied his age.

[D13]

Wesley So

Vasily Ivanchuk

Khanty-Mansiysk 2009 (2.2)

Game 85

1. d2-d4 d7-d5  
2. c2-c4 c7-c6  
3. ♘g1-f3 ♘g8-f6  
4. c4xd5

A very unpleasant surprise! Never mind the fact that the young Philippine had spent his whole life starting games with the king's pawn and had only very recently become 'ambidextrous', his play had always been distinguished by aggression. But on this day he decided to swallow his pride.

4. ... c6xd5  
5. ♘b1-c3 ♘b8-c6  
6. ♙c1-f4 a7-a6  
7. ♖a1-c1 ♙c8-f5  
8. e2-e3 e7-e6  
9. ♖d1-b3 ♖a8-a7!?

It's hard to liven up such an innocuous position.

10. ♘f3-e5 ♘c6xe5  
11. ♙f4xe5 ♘f6-d7  
12. ♙e5-g3 ♙f8-e7

13. ♖f1-e2 0-0  
14. 0-0 ♔d8-a8



**15. c3-b1**

Preparing to double on the c-file.

15. ... ♖f8-c8  
16. ♙e2-d3

Consistently pursuing exchanges.

16. ... ♙f5xd3  
17. ♖b3xd3 ♜c8-c6!  
18. ♜c1-c2 ♙d7-b6  
19. ♜f1-c1 ♙b6-c4  
20. ♘b1-d2

You could only sympathise with Black if he was forced to play for a win in the position after 20.b3 ♖d6 21.♙xc6 bxc6 22.♖c3 ♗f5 23.♗a4, although the move in the game doesn't yet spoil anything.

20. ...	♟c4xd2
21. ♖d3xd2	a6-a5
22. ♖d2-d3	a5-a4
23. f2-f3	♞a7-a6
24. e3-e4	♞a8-d8
25. ♞c2xc6	♞a6xc6
26. ♞c1xc6	b7xc6
27. ♞g3-f2	h7-h5
28. ♞f2-e3	♞d8-a5
29. ♞g1-f2	h5-h4

His opponent's overly blunt play for a draw has allowed Black to fully equalize.

lise, but given such a strategy didn't correspond in any way to the style or temperament of the Philippine he 'flinched'.

**30. g2-g4?      h4-h3!**

Ivanchuk, of course, took his chance.

**31. ♔f2-g3?**

As mentioned before, mistakes love company. In view of the lethal threat of 31...♙h4 it was essential to switch to pure defence: 31.♖d2 ♙h4+ 32.♕f1 ♗b5+ 33.♗e2 ♗b4 34.a3 ♗b3 35.e5. However, such a psychological transformation is difficult even for more experienced chess players.

31. ... ♔a5-e1+  
32. ♔g3xh3

After 32.♙f2 the simplest response is 32...♙h4+! 33.♖xh4 ♔xf2+ 34.♖xh3 ♔xb2 35.exd5 cxd5 36.a3 ♔b3 with a technically won endgame.

32. ... d5xe4  
33. ♖d3xe4



33. ... ♔e1-f1+?

And once more Ivanchuk's nerves let him down at the decisive moment. The simple move 33...♖e2! would have left White in a hopeless position. For example: 34.g5 (or 34.♖e5 ♖xb2 35.♙f4

♙f8! 36. ♖b8 ♗xd4--+) 34...♙d6!  
35.f4 ♙b4! (the best move, but  
35...♗xb2 also wasn't bad) 36.d5 cxd5  
37.♗xb4 ♗xe3+ 38.♖g4 d4 and Black  
should win.

**34. ♖h3-g3 ♙e7-d6+**

The win has already slipped away. It also  
doesn't help to play 34...♗e1+ 35.♙f2!  
♙h4+ 36.♖xh4 ♗xf2+ 37.♖h3 ♗xb2  
38.♗xc6 ♗xa2 39.♗e8+ ♖h7  
40.♗xf7 ♗d5 41.♖h4 a3 42.g5 and  
Black can't escape perpetual check.

**35. ♙e3-f4 ♙d6-b4**

**36. g4-g5!**

The only move, but sufficient.

<b>36. ...</b>	<b>♙b4-e1+</b>
<b>37. ♖g3-g4</b>	<b>♗f1-g2+</b>
<b>38. ♙f4-g3</b>	<b>♙e1xg3</b>
<b>39. h2xg3</b>	<b>♗g2xb2</b>
<b>40. ♗e4xc6</b>	<b>♗b2xd4+</b>
<b>41. f3-f4</b>	<b>g7-g6</b>
<b>42. ♗c6-c2</b>	<b>a4-a3</b>
<b>43. ♖g4-f3</b>	<b>e6-e5</b>
<b>44. f4xe5</b>	<b>♗d4xe5</b>
<b>45. ♗c2-d3</b>	<b>♗e5-b2</b>
<b>46. ♗d3-d5</b>	<b>1/2-1/2</b>

Everything repeated itself with amazing  
precision. Patience, composure and  
mastery were features of Vasily's play  
only up until the decisive moment.  
When literally all that was needed to  
win was a single accurate move he  
again unexpectedly froze. Isn't it this  
frail nervous system that prevents  
Ivanchuk from fully realising his  
enormous chess talent!?

Against that backdrop the fantastic  
composure and imperturbability of an-  
other Ukrainian grandmaster, Ruslan  
Ponomarev, are even more evident.  
There's someone who never loses his

head! It's no surprise that in the knock-  
out system Ruslan is one of the world's  
most successful players. That's not be-  
cause he somehow magically manages  
to avoid critical situations, but simply  
that he deals with them much more  
easily. He lost the first game of his mi-  
cro-match against the strong Chinese  
player Wang Hao with white. I remem-  
ber the mental suffering I went  
through, and what incredible difficul-  
ties Ivanchuk had in beating his oppo-  
nents. Ruslan solved a similar problem  
with disarming ease.

**[B85]**

Game 86

**Wang Hao**

**Ruslan Ponomarev**

Khanty-Mansiysk 2007 (2.2)

<b>1. e2-e4</b>	<b>c7-c5</b>
<b>2. ♖g1-f3</b>	<b>e7-e6</b>

After 2...d6 you have to reckon with  
3.♙b5+.

<b>3. d2-d4</b>	<b>c5xd4</b>
<b>4. ♖f3xd4</b>	<b>♖g8-f6</b>
<b>5. ♖b1-c3</b>	<b>d7-d6</b>
<b>6. ♙f1-e2</b>	<b>a7-a6</b>
<b>7. f2-f4</b>	<b>♗d8-c7</b>
<b>8. 0-0</b>	<b>♙f8-e7</b>
<b>9. a2-a4</b>	<b>0-0</b>
<b>10. ♙c1-e3</b>	<b>♖b8-c6</b>
<b>11. ♖g1-h1</b>	<b>♗f8-e8</b>

The position on the board is the tabiya  
of the Scheveningen Variation. Thou-  
sands of games have started from this  
position, but that hasn't made it any  
simpler. White has a few equivalent op-  
tions, the most popular of which is  
12.♙f3.

<b>12. ♙e2-d3</b>	<b>♙c8-d7</b>
<b>13. ♗d1-f3</b>	<b>♖c6-b4</b>

14. a4-a5 ♖d7-c6  
15. ♖f3-g3

Of course 15.g4 d5 16.e5 ♖d7 would be totally out of keeping with the sporting situation.

15. ... ♖e7-f8  
16. ♖d4-f3

It's not easy for White to decide on a plan. 16.♖xc6!? bxc6 17.♖b6 ♗b8 18.e5 ♖d7 19.♖e4 d5 20.♖f6+ ♖xf6 21.exf6 g6 also didn't promise much, but the position would have been greatly simplified, which would work in Wang Hao's favour.

16. ... ♖f6-d7  
17. ♖e3-d4 ♖a8-c8



17...e5?! 18.fxe5 dxe5 19.♖c4! is dangerous for Black. The move in the game prepares that advance.

### 18. e4-e5?!

And again it's not very clear what White should do. Manoeuvring in such a position is very difficult, and the match situation doesn't favour risky actions. It doesn't look bad, for example, to play 18.♖g5!? when after 18...h6 (18...f6 19.♖xe6 ♗xe6 20.♖c4) you can play 19.♖xf7! ♖xf7 20.f5 and it's hard for Black to defend: 20...e5 (relatively

better is 20...♖e5 21.♖xe5 dxe5 22.♖c4 ♖g8 23.♖xe6+ ♖h8 24.♖xc8 ♗xc8. But here as well after 25.f6 White has active play) 21.♖c4+ d5 (21...♖e7? 22.♗h4+ ♖f6 23.♖b6 ♗b8 24.♖b3 is too dangerous) 22.♖b6! (22.exd5? ♖b5 23.♖b3 ♖c4, repulsing the attack) 22...♖xb6 23.axb6 ♗d6 24.♖b3! with an extremely strong attack. Here's one of the possible continuations: 24...♖g8 25.exd5 ♖b5 26.♖e4 ♗d8 27.f6+— But if Black so desired he could avoid all these complications with the help of the zwischenzug 18...♖xd3! 19.cxd3 and only now 19...f6 with a good position.

18. ... ♖b4xd3  
19. c2xd3 d6xe5  
20. f4xe5



The first impression is that things aren't too bad for White. In particular, 21.♖g5 is threatened, but Ponomarev's composed reply clarifies the situation.

20. ... f7-f5!

Now White doesn't have the slightest chance of an attack, and the static factors, in particular the presence of two bishops, ensure Black an advantage. The exchange of queens is therefore practically forced.

21. e5xf6 ♖c7xg3  
22. f6-f7+

22.hxg3 gxf6 also favours Black.

22. ... ♔g8xf7  
23. h2xg3 ♔f7-g8  
24. ♘f3-e5

A little more stubborn was 24.♘e4 e5  
25.♙c3.

24. ... ♘d7xe5  
25. ♙d4xe5 ♖e8-d8



Black's position is undoubtedly better, but after all White only needs a draw. Ponomarev, however, doesn't give his opponent the slightest chance as he calmly and accurately brings the game to victory.

26. d3-d4 ♙f8-d6!  
27. ♖f1-d1 ♙d6xe5  
28. d4xe5 ♖d8xd1+!  
29. ♖a1xd1 ♖c8-f8  
30. ♔h1-g1 ♖f8-f5  
31. ♖d1-e1 ♖f5-g5  
32. ♖e1-e3 ♖g5-g4!

There's no way of defending White's multiple pawn weaknesses.

33. ♘c3-e2 ♖g4-b4  
34. b2-b3 ♔g8-f7  
35. ♖e3-d3 ♙c6-b5

36. ♖d3-f3+ ♔f7-e7  
37. ♘e2-f4 ♙b5-c6  
38. ♖f3-e3 ♖b4-b5  
39. g3-g4 ♖b5-b4!  
40. g2-g3 h7-h6!

Black doesn't rush. 40...g5 41.♘h5  
♖xg4 42.♘f6 would have given his opponent a chance.

41. ♔g1-f2 g7-g5  
42. ♘f4-h5 ♖b4xg4  
43. ♘h5-f6 ♖g4-b4  
44. g3-g4 ♖b4-b5  
45. ♔f2-e2 ♙c6-d5

45...♖xa5 would also suffice.

46. ♖e3-d3

On 46.♖c3 no doubt there would have followed 46...♙c6 47.♖e3 ♖xa5.

46. ... ♖b5xa5  
47. ♔e2-e3 ♖a5-b5  
48. ♔e3-d4 a6-a5  
49. ♖d3-c3 ♖b5-b4+  
50. ♔d4-d3 ♙d5-c6  
0-1

It might seem as though the game contained nothing special – neither a sophisticated novelty in the opening nor any spectacular decisions in the middle-game. Instead everything was carried out professionally, technically and with minimal risk. The main thing was that an extremely difficult sporting challenge had been overcome.

Does it need to be said that Ponomarev won the tiebreak and advanced to the next round? It's precisely Ruslan's ability to achieve his goals by relatively simple means that allows him to conserve energy, something that's vital in knockout tournaments. In that regard he stands out favourably among other

grandmasters, even those who aren't inferior to him in class.

The format of the Candidates' Matches in Kazan was very similar to the cup. However, the encounters didn't consist of two but four games, and the stakes were higher. Any of the Kazan pairings would have graced the World Cup final.

In the quarterfinal match between Topalov and Kamsky a situation arose which we've seen more than once in the pages of this book. The ex-World Champion, playing White, needed to win at all costs. The Bulgarian conducted the game flawlessly, and everything was done according to the best recipes: an opening surprise as early as the fifth move, aggressive but also positionally justified play in the middlegame and, finally, a well-timed 'turning of the screw' in his opponent's time trouble...

[A16]

Game 87

**Veselin Topalov****Gata Kamsky**

Kazan m 2011 (1.4)

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 1. ♖g1-f3   | ♘g8-f6 |
| 2. c2-c4    | g7-g6  |
| 3. ♖b1-c3   | d7-d5  |
| 4. c4xd5    | ♘f6xd5 |
| 5. ♔d1-c2!? |        |



A new move on the 5th move in a well-known position is a great rarity. Of course White didn't choose such a move order in order to return to the main position of the Grünfeld Defence after 5.d4. 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.dxc3 ♔xd1+ 7.♘xd1 also couldn't have satisfied him given the match situation. Instead you might have expected something like 5.h4!? or an improvement in the line 5.♔b3 ♘b6 6.d4 ♗g7 7.♗f4 ♗e6 8.♔a3 ♘c6 9.0-0-0!?, which was seen in the second game of the match.

5. ...

♗f8-g7

The surprise forced Kamsky to start thinking, and the natural move in the game didn't follow immediately. Gata was probably studying the consequences of 5...♘c6:

A) 6.d4 ♘db4 (or 6...♗g7 7.e4 ♘db4 8.♔b3! ♗xd4 9.♗c4 0-0 10.♗h6 with a threatening initiative for the sacrificed pawn) 7.♔a4 ♗g7 (you can't escape the problems with 7...♗d7 8.♔d1! ♗g4 9.a3 ♘d5 10.e4 ♘xc3 11.bxc3) 8.e4! ♗d7 9.♔b3 ♗xd4 10.♘d5! and it's hard for Black to defend;

B) Weaker is 6.e4 ♘db4 7.♔b1 ♗g4 8.a3 ♗xf3 9.axb4 (9.gxf3 ♘a6 10.b4 ♘d4) 9...♗g4 and the control over the d4-point guarantees Black comfortable play.

6. e2-e4!

♘d5-b6

Black again has a difficult choice: 6...♘xc3 7.dxc3 would give White a small but persistent edge. After 6...♘b4 7.♔a4+ ♘c6 8.d4 ♗d7 9.♔b3 ♗xd4 10.♘d5! you get the position we looked at on the previous move.

7. d2-d4

0-0

## 8. ♖c1-e3

This position is well-known to theory, but with the queen on b3. As becomes clear, on c2 the queen is located at the very least no worse.

## 8. ... ♖c8-g4

8...♖c6!?



## 9. ♖f3-e5!

An important nuance which, judging by the speed it was played, was prepared by Topalov at home. After the natural 9.0-0-0 ♖c6 10.d5 ♖e5 11.♖e2 ♖ec4 Black solves all his problems by taking advantage of the absence of the queen on b3. The strong move in the game, on the other hand, emphasises the virtues of 5.♙c2.

## 9. ... ♖g7xe5

With the queen on b3 Black would have had an important tempo with 9...♖e6.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 10. d4xe5  | ♖b8-c6 |
| 11. h2-h3  | ♖g4-e6 |
| 12. ♖a1-d1 | ♙d8-c8 |
| 13. f2-f4  |        |

It's high time to draw conclusions from the theoretical duel. White has the advantage of the two bishops, a powerful pawn centre and a big advantage on the

clock – a wonderful basis for playing for a win in such an important game. However, the struggle is far from over.

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 13. ...   | ♙f8-d8 |
| 14. b2-b3 | ♖c6-b4 |

Slightly more accurate was 14...♖xd1+ 15.♙xd1 ♙e8 16.♖e2 ♖d8 17.♙c1 ♖d4 although after 18.♙f2 White would retain uncomfortable pressure.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 15. ♖d1xd8+ | ♙c8xd8 |
| 16. ♙c2-b1± |        |



## 16. ... f7-f5

Essentially this is the only way to try and somehow liven play up.

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 17. e5xf6  | e7xf6   |
| 18. ♖f1-e2 | ♙d8-e7  |
| 19. 0-0    | ♖e6-f7  |
| 20. ♖e3-f2 | ♖a8-d8  |
| 21. ♖f1-d1 | ♖d8xd1+ |
| 22. ♙b1xd1 |         |

The exchange of rooks hasn't fundamentally altered the evaluation of the position: White has a serious advantage, while Black is forced to maintain a passive defence.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 22. ...    | c7-c5  |
| 23. ♖e2-f1 | ♖b4-c6 |
| 24. g2-g3  | ♙g8-g7 |
| 25. ♖f1-g2 | h7-h5  |

Black's desire to somehow become active is understandable, but the move in the game only weakens his king position.

- |            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 26. ♖c3-b5 | ♟b6-c8  |
| 27. ♔d1-d2 | c5-c4   |
| 28. b3xc4  | ♙f7xc4  |
| 29. ♖b5-d4 | ♔e7-b4  |
| 30. ♔d2-c1 | ♞c8-e7  |
| 31. a2-a3  | ♔b4-a4  |
| 32. ♔c1-b2 | b7-b6   |
| 33. ♙g1-h2 | ♙g7-f7  |
| 34. ♔b2-c3 | ♙c4-a2! |



Kamsky defends with his usual tenacity. The idea of the last move is connected with 35... ♔c4.

### 35. f4-f5!?

An attempt to take maximum advantage of his opponent's time trouble. After 35. ♙f1 (with the threat of 36. ♙b5) Black would have had to find the only defence 35... ♞xd4 36. ♙xd4 ♔c6.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 35. ...    | ♔a4-c4 |
| 36. ♔c3-b2 | ♞c6-e5 |
| 37. ♔b2-d2 |        |

It was worth considering 37. fxg6+, while the strongest continuation was probably 37. ♞b5! ♙g7 38. ♞xa7 gxf5 39. ♙d4 ♞d7 40. ♞b5.

### 37. ... g6-g5

The computer-like 37... ♙b1! 38. ♔h6 ♔a2 was impossible to discover in time trouble.

### 38. ♞d4-e6?



At such a crucial moment it's hard to maintain your composure even in your opponent's time trouble. The easiest way to underline the advantage was 38. ♔d1! g4 39. ♔d2, breaking through to the h5-pawn.

### 38. ... ♞e7-c6??

Kamsky responds in kind with a mistake of his own, and a much more serious one. He could almost have equalised with 38... ♙b3! 39. ♙d4 ♔d3.

### 39. ♔d2-d6 ♙f7-e8

39... ♞e7 40. ♞xg5+.

### 40. ♞e6-c7+?

Seriously complicating his task. There was a simple win after 40. ♙d4!. For example: 40... ♔d3 41. ♔f8+ ♙d7 42. ♔xf6 ♞f3+ 43. ♙xf3 ♔xf3 44. ♔f7+ ♞e7 45. ♞f8+ ♙d8 46. ♔xa2.

### 40. ... ♙e8-f7 41. ♞c7-d5!?



It wasn't too late to return to the previous variation: 41. ♖e6! ♜e8 42. ♙d4!.

**41. ... ♜c4-e2!**

After getting out of time trouble Kamsky demonstrates amazing ingenuity.

**42. ♜d6xf6+ ♜f7-e8**

**43. ♜f6-e6+ ♜e8-f8**

**44. ♜h2-g1**

The move in the game still doesn't spoil anything, but it seems this was the moment when Topalov lost the winning thread. With a large reserve of time he just couldn't find one of the winning variations. For example:

A) 44. ♜h6+ ♜f7 45. ♙g1! ♙xd5 (45... ♜f3+ 46. ♜h1 ♜xg1 47. ♜f6+) 46. exd5 ♜d8 (46... ♜d4 47. ♜h7+ ♜e8 48. f6 ♜ef3+ 49. ♜h1 ♜xg1 50. f7+) 47. ♜h1!;

B) Or 44. ♙g1! ♜f3+ 45. ♜h1 ♙xd5 46. ♜d6+! ♜e8 47. exd5 ♜e7 48. f6 ♜f5 49. f7+ ♜xf7 50. ♜e6+.

**44. ... ♜e2-d1+**



**45. ♙g2-f1??**

The ex-World Champion's powers had deserted him once and for all. 45. ♜h2 ♜e2 46. ♜h6+ would still have won.

**45. ... ♙a2xd5**

**46. e4xd5**

Insufficient is 46. ♜xd5 ♜xd5 47. exd5 ♜e7 48. ♙e2 ♜xf5 49. ♙xh5 ♜e7 and Black survives in the endgame.

**46. ... ♜c6-d4!**

**47. ♜e6-f6+ ♜f8-g8**

**48. ♜f6xg5+**

The best practical chance was 48. ♙xd4 ♜xd4+ 49. ♜h1 ♜xd5+ 50. ♙g2 but after the accurate 50... ♜d1+ 51. ♜h2 ♜f3+! 52. ♙xf3 ♜xf3 53. ♜xg5+ ♜f7 Black would still draw.

**48. ... ♜g8-f7**

**49. ♜g5-d8 ♜d1-c2!**

Essential, but sufficient. White no longer has the slightest chance of victory.

**50. ♙f1-g2 ♜c2-c1+**

**51. ♜g1-h2 ♜c1-c2**

**52. ♙f2-g1 ♜d4-f3+**

**53. ♜h2-h1 ♜f3-e1**

**54. ♙g1-f2!**

Now it's White who only has a single path to salvation.

**54. ... ♜c2xf2**

**55. ♜d8-c7+ ♜f7-f6**

**56. ♜c7-d6+ ♜f6-f7**

**57. ♜d6-c7+ ♜f7-f6**

**58. ♜c7-d6+ ♜f6-f7**

1/2-1/2

Why did Topalov stumble at the last moment, just a step away from a deserved win? Of course Kamsky put up desperate resistance, but at a certain point little depended on him anymore. For some reason luck deserted White. Perhaps Topalov simply didn't have enough energy and motivation – qualities for which he'd always stood out.

The final match followed a totally different scenario. The first five games ended in draws and everyone was already anticipating a thrilling tiebreak. However, everything was decided in the sixth and final game...

[D76]

Game 88

**Boris Gelfand****Alexander Grischuk**

Kazan m 2011 (3.6)

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 1. d2-d4   | ♘g8-f6 |
| 2. c2-c4   | g7-g6  |
| 3. ♖g1-f3  | ♙f8-g7 |
| 4. g2-g3   | d7-d5  |
| 5. c4xd5   | ♘f6xd5 |
| 6. ♙f1-g2  | ♘d5-b6 |
| 7. ♘b1-c3  | ♘b8-c6 |
| 8. e2-e3   | 0-0    |
| 9. 0-0     | ♙f8-e8 |
| 10. ♙f1-e1 | a7-a5  |
| 11. ♚d1-e2 | ♙c8-g4 |
| 12. h2-h3  | ♙g4-e6 |

**13. b2-b3**

Strangely enough, this natural move is a novelty. However, the position that arose had been seen a handful of times in practice. Another possible continuation is 13. ♚d1 ♙c4 14. ♚c2 ♘b4 15. ♚b1 a4 16. e4 ♚d7 with complex play. The move in the game limits Black's counterplay connected to ...♙c4.

**13. ... a5-a4****14. ♙a1-b1!**

This modest move is where White's real idea lies. It's important to maintain control over the c4-square. White's whole opening concept turned out to be a complete surprise for Grischuk, who started to take long thinks.

**14. ... a4xb3****15. a2xb3 ♚d8-c8****16. ♖g1-h2 ♙a8-a5!?**

The first impression is that this allows Black to seize the initiative.

**17. ♙e1-d1!**

With this move Gelfand starts to implement a deep and paradoxical idea, fundamentally altering the character of the position.

**17. ... ♙a5-h5****18. ♘f3-h4!**

The most energetic and principled continuation. No good at all are 18.h4 ♙g4 and 18.♘g1, while 18.♚f1 is too passive.

**18. ... ♙g7-f6****19. f2-f4!**

A logical continuation of the plan begun on the 17th move. However, the

MF is sceptical about White's idea and considers it sensible to force a peaceful outcome:

A) 19. ♖f3 ♜a5 (there's also a more elegant path to a draw: 19... ♜h6!? 20.d5 ♖xc3 21.dxc6 bxc6 22.e4 ♜xh4 23.gxh4 ♖e5+ 24.♔g1 ♖xb3! 25.♜xb3 ♞xh3) 20. ♖g2 ♜d8;

B) It also promises nothing to play 19.d5 ♖xc3 20.dxc6 bxc6 21. ♖xc6 ♜d8.

19. ... ♜e8-d8  
20. ♖e2-f2



The critical position of the game and of the whole final match of the Candidates. The first impression is that Black has no difficulty, and that moreover he'll be the one to determine the character of the coming struggle.

20. ... ♖f6xh4?!

Grischuk's choice turns out to be a failure, but that only became clear as a result of Gelfand's wonderful play. Exchanging the bishop really does give White additional options. Commentators both during the game and afterwards suggested that 20... ♖d5!? was the best move. Reaching an unambiguous evaluation of that move and the extremely complex positions arising from it is very difficult, but problems would remain for Black, particularly taking

into account Grischuk's serious time trouble. For example: 21. ♖xd5 ♜hxd5 (21... ♜xd5!?) 22. ♖xd5!? (22. ♖b2 in this form isn't as strong as in the game, if only because of 22... ♜b5) 22... ♖xd5 23. ♖f3 (it's perfectly possible that Alexander carried out the exchange on the 20th move in order to exclude this option) 23... ♞e6 (23... ♞f5 24. ♖d2) 24.b4 ♞e4 25. ♖d2 ♞c2 and it's unclear how serious Black's compensation is for the exchange.

21. g3xh4 ♖b6-d5  
22. ♖c3xd5 ♜h5xd5



23. ♖c1-b2!

It's probably this quiet move that Grischuk underestimated during his calculations. After 23. ♖xd5? ♖xd5 White would already be obliged to play 24.f5! with roughly equal play. Now the game goes rapidly downhill for Black.

23. ... ♜d5-b5

The best chance was probably 23...f5, striving to organise a blockade along the light squares. However, in that case the black king position would be weakened. By playing 24.h5! ♖f7 25. ♞h4 ♞e6 26. ♖xd5 ♞xd5 27. ♜g1 White would maintain an advantage.

24. ♞f2-e2!

Also not bad was 24.e4 ♖xb3 25.♞dc1, but the move in the game was even stronger.

24. ... ♞b5-h5  
25. e3-e4! ♖e6xb3  
26. ♞d1-c1

Two long-range bishops, a powerful fist of pawns in the centre and White's wonderfully mobile rooks versus Black's pieces scattered chaotically around the board – the outcome of the struggle is determined.

26. ... ♞c6-a5  
27. d4-d5 b7-b6

The MF gives as the best move 27...♞a2 28.♞a1 ♞b3 29.♞xa2 ♞xc1 30.♞xc1, but that recommendation in itself should tell you how tough Black's position is.

28. ♞b2-e5! c7-c5  
29. d5xc6

A slight inaccuracy. Even stronger was 29.♞b5!.

29. ... f7-f6  
30. ♞e5-a1

Boris made this move almost instantaneously. The machine prefers the forced variation 30.c7 ♞d7 31.♞b5 fxe5 32.♞xd7 ♞xd7 33.c8♞+ ♞xc8 34.♞xc8+ but Gelfand's choice is even more unpleasant for Black, particular given his opponent's terrible time trouble.

30. ... ♞h5-c5

No better was 30...♞c7 31.e5 ♞f7 32.♞d1! and Black's in trouble.

31. ♞c1xc5 b6xc5  
32. ♞e2-b5



32. ... ♞c8-c7?

The final time-trouble blunder. More stubborn was 32...♞a2 33.♞b2 ♞c7, but in that case as well, after 34.e5 the outcome of the game would be the same.

33. ♞b1xb3 ♞a5xc6  
34. e4-e5 ♞c6-d4  
35. ♞b5-c4+ 1-0

Here as well White managed to surprise his opponent in the opening. The novelty didn't, it's true, fundamentally alter the evaluation of the position, but Gelfand turned out to be better prepared for the unconventional decisions that followed.

It's possible to conclude that in general the Israeli player thrives in the nervous atmosphere of deciding encounters: after all, he'd won his last twelve matches before the World Championship match with Anand – an amazing achievement. Although Grischuk also showed himself to be a cold-blooded fighter with nerves of steel, in the final game the scales tipped in Boris' favour. It can't be ruled out that the decisive factor in that clash was the all-consuming love of chess that's accompanied Gelfand over the whole course of his long career. His opponent wasn't able to find worthy counter-arguments.

There's a special drama to deciding games in team tournaments. After all, the responsibility for the fate of the encounter is multiplied, at the very least, by the number of directly interested parties. The force field generated around such games sometimes gives rise to chess masterpieces, but often leads to totally incomprehensible mistakes. The atmosphere of heightened responsibility has a completely different effect on different players: for some it produces a kind of mental paralysis and they become completely helpless, while for others, on the contrary, it fully mobilises all their inner resources and they play far above their usual level.

The concept of 'a team player', far from being a journalistic cliché, is a genuinely useful term. 'Team spirit' and 'an excellent team atmosphere' also aren't abstract concepts, but crucial components of success. The real strength of a team is often determined not by a high average rating but precisely by what are, at first glance, totally non-chess factors. The achievements of the Armenian team are tangible proof, and the outstanding contribution of Gabriel Sargissian to those victories confirms the thesis about the role of personality in chess history.

The Ukrainian team also has its heroes, but if the fantastic play of Vasily Ivanchuk in the Olympiads won by Ukraine is to an extent just a confirmation of his extremely high class, then the consistently impressive results of Pavel Elianov and particularly Zahar Efimenko require additional analysis. The Olympiad in Khanty-Mansiysk featured a rivalry between Ukraine and the Russian first team and the encounter between the key rivals was extremely important. At that point Ukraine was

leading, and the minimum goal we set ourselves was to preserve the status quo. The match, however, was very tough right from the outset. Karjakin-Elianov was essentially won by White at home and was included in the previous chapter. Ivanchuk and Ponomarev were fighting for equality. So our only hope was Efimenko's game.

[C67]

**Zahar Efimenko**

**Vladimir Malakhov**

Khanty-Mansiysk Olympiad 2010 (8)

Game 89

- |    |                |               |
|----|----------------|---------------|
| 1. | <b>e2-e4</b>   | <b>e7-e5</b>  |
| 2. | <b>♘g1-f3</b>  | <b>♜b8-c6</b> |
| 3. | <b>♙f1-b5</b>  | <b>♜g8-f6</b> |
| 4. | <b>0-0</b>     | <b>♜f6xe4</b> |
| 5. | <b>d2-d4</b>   | <b>♜e4-d6</b> |
| 6. | <b>♙b5xc6</b>  | <b>d7xc6</b>  |
| 7. | <b>d4xe5</b>   | <b>♜d6-f5</b> |
| 8. | <b>♚d1xd8+</b> | <b>♜e8xd8</b> |
| 9. | <b>♜b1-c3</b>  |               |



The position on the board is one of the most popular tabiyas in modern chess. Each player has trumps: White has a pawn superiority on the kingside while Black has the bishop pair. The early disturbance of the strategic balance and the great variety of plans have drawn the attention of the world's best players to this variation.



Zahar Efimenko

9. ... ♔d8-e8

This is the most common move, although the plan of evacuating the black king to the queenside also hasn't been refuted by anyone. Efimenko has great experience in this variation for both colours. At this Olympiad he'd already beaten Ivan Saric with Black.

10. ♖c3-e2

The game against Saric went differently: 10.h3 b6 (recently Black more often chooses 10...h5) 11.♖d1 ♖b7 12.♙f4 ♖c8 and in a sharp struggle Zahar managed to claim a victory.

10. ... ♙f5-e7  
 11. h2-h3 ♙e7-g6  
 12. b2-b3 h7-h6  
 13. ♙c1-b2 c6-c5  
 14. ♖a1-d1 ♙c8-e6

15. ♙e2-c3 ♙f8-e7  
 16. ♙c3-d5 ♙e7-d8  
 17. c2-c4 a7-a5  
 18. a2-a4 c7-c6  
 19. ♙d5-c3 ♙d8-e7  
 20. ♙c3-e4 ♖a8-d8  
 21. ♖f1-e1

Malakhov has successfully resolved his opening problems and fully equalised the position. However, the match situation forced White to play for a win. Paradoxically, only waiting tactics offer chances of success. The active 21.♙d6+ ♙xd6 22.exd6 f6 would only simplify Black's task..

21. ... ♖d8xd1  
 22. ♖e1xd1 ♙g6-f4

22...♙f5!?

23. ♙b2-a3 b7-b6  
 24. ♙e4-d6+ ♙e8-f8

Of course not 24...♙xd6? 25.♖xd6 ♙d7 26.e6 ♙xe6 27.♙e5 with a decisive edge for White.

25. ♙g1-f1 g7-g5  
 26. ♙a3-c1 ♙f8-g7  
 27. ♙c1xf4 g5xf4  
 28. ♙f3-d2



Somewhere around this point it became clear that the fate of the match would

depend on the result of this game. Black's position is absolutely safe. It was possible to keep the bishop pair, but Malakhov's choice also wasn't bad.

**28. ... ♖e7xd6!?**

28...f6!?

**29. e5xd6 ♜h8-d8**

**30. ♜d2-e4 f7-f5?**

A mistake, though not an obvious one. It seems Black's winning the e5-pawn, but things aren't so simple. Better was 30...♙f5 31.f3 f6 32.♞d2 ♚f7 and it's impossible for White to improve his position.

**31. ♜e4-c3 ♚g7-f6**

**32. ♚f1-e2 ♖e6-f7**

**33. d6-d7 ♜f7-h5+**

This reflex check only helps White, but Malakhov's task was no longer as simple as it might seem at first glance.

It turns out that in the line 33...♚e6 34.f3 ♞xd7 35.♞xd7 ♚xd7 36.♜d3 ♚e6 37.♜e2 ♚e5 38.♜c3 (intending ♜c1) 38...♚f6 39.h4 the pawn on f4 is lost.

There's also a similar endgame after 33...♚e5 34.f3 ♖e6 35.h4 ♞xd7 36.♞xd7 ♖xd7 37.♜d3. I won't claim it's unequivocally won for White, but he's certainly the one with chances.

**34. f2-f3 ♚f6-e6**

**35. ♚e2-e1! ♖h5-f7**

35...♞xd7 36.♞xd7 ♚xd7 37.♜e2.

**36. ♜c3-e2 ♚e6-e5**

**37. ♜e2-c1 ♖f7-e6**

**38. ♜c1-d3+ ♚e5-f6**

**39. ♜d3xf4 ♖e6xd7?**

The decisive mistake! With rooks on the board Black's difficulties only grow. He

should have played 39...♞xd7 40.♞xd7 ♖xd7, switching to the position mentioned in the previous note.

**40. ♚e1-f2 ♚f6-e7**



White has a serious and probably decisive advantage, but it's very hard to maintain your composure under conditions of incredible psychological pressure, when each move can decide the fate of a crucial match. Efimenko's resilience can only be admired. He didn't give his opponent a single chance.

**41. ♜f4-g6+! ♚e7-e6**

An only move.

**42. f3-f4 ♞d8-b8**

**43. g2-g4! ♖d7-e8**

**44. ♜g6-h4!**

Stronger than the 'cultured' 44.♜e5. This way White forces the capture on g4.

**44. ... f5xg4**

**45. h3xg4 b6-b5**

**46. ♜h4-f5 b5xa4**

**47. b3xa4 ♞b8-b4**

**48. ♞d1-d6+ ♚e6-f7**

**49. ♞d6xh6**

Again not a trivial decision. The c4-pawn is indirectly defended, and now pushing the g-pawn decides matters.

49. ... ♖b4xa4  
 50. g4-g5 ♜f7-g8  
 51. ♜f5-d6

Of course also winning was 51.g6 ♖xc4 52.♜f3 but Zahar plays super-solidly, so ‘the team doesn’t worry’.

51. ... ♙e8-f7  
 52. ♜d6xf7 ♜g8xf7  
 53. f4-f5 ♖a4xc4  
 54. ♜f2-f3

The black pawns play no role whatsoever in this position.

54. ... ♖c4-b4  
 55. ♖h6-h7+ ♜f7-g8  
 56. g5-g6 1-0

As a result of this victory Ukraine maintained the lead.

The next test for Zahar came in the 9th round. For a long time our victory in the match against Azerbaijan hadn’t looked in doubt but, as often happens, the situation changed dramatically in time trouble, and once again everything was decided by Efimenko’s game. Midway through he’d had a big edge, but by the first time control he retained only faint winning chances.

[B92]  
**Zahar Efimenko**  
**Eltaj Safarli**

Game 90

Khanty-Mansiysk Olympiad 2010 (9)

1. e2-e4 c7-c5  
 2. ♜g1-f3 d7-d6  
 3. d2-d4 c5xd4  
 4. ♜f3xd4 ♜g8-f6  
 5. ♜b1-c3 a7-a6  
 6. ♙f1-e2 e7-e5  
 7. ♜d4-b3 ♙f8-e7

8. 0-0 0-0  
 9. ♙c1-e3 ♙c8-e6  
 10. ♜c3-d5 ♜b8-d7  
 11. ♖d1-d3 ♙e6xd5  
 12. e4xd5 ♜d7-c5  
 13. ♖d3-d2 b7-b6

13...♜fe4 14.♖b4 b6 15.f3 ♜f6  
 16.♖ad1 was seen, in particular, in Short-Efimenko, Wijk aan Zee 2009, so the position was well-known to Zahar.

14. f2-f3 ♜f6-h5  
 15. ♖f1-d1 f7-f5  
 16. ♜b3xc5 b6xc5  
 17. c2-c3 ♙e7-h4  
 18. ♙e2-d3



18. ... g7-g6?!

The natural continuation of Black’s plan was 18...f4 19.♙f2 ♙xf2+, exchanging the dark-squared bishops.

19. b2-b4 c5xb4  
 20. c3xb4 ♙h4-f6?!

Inconsistent. Here as well he should have played 20...f4 21.♙f2 ♙xf2+ 22.♖xf2 ♜f6 although after 23.♖ac1 White has the initiative.

21. ♖a1-b1

21.♖ac1 gives Black extra options in the variation 21...e4 22.fxe4 f4 23.♙f2 ♙g5 as the c1-rook is hanging.



**21. ... e5-e4!?**

An interesting means of sharpening play.

**22. f3xe4 e6-e5**

**23. e3-f2!**

23.exf5 ♖h4 led to unnecessary complications for White.

**23. ... f5-f4?!**

There was more hope of counterplay after 23...♖f4 24.exf5 ♜xd3 25.♖xd3 ♜xf5 or 23...fxe4 24.♙xe4 ♜c8.

**24. e3-d3 e5-f6**

**25. ♖d2-d3 g6-g5**



**26. ♖d3-h3!?**

An unexpected decision, preventing ...g5-g4. In case of the natural 26.♜dc1 g4 27.♜c6 the position would have become extremely sharp: 27...f3! 28.gxf3 ♜h5.

**26. ... e6-g7**

Or 26...♜xe4 27.♙d3 ♜f6 28.♙f5 (28.♖f5!?) 28...♙g7 29.♜dc1 with an edge for White.

**27. e2-g4?**

Letting almost all of the advantage slip. The composed 27.♜dc1! ♜xe4 28.♙d3 ♜f6 29.♖f5 was very strong. 27.♜bc1 was also good.

**27. ... f6xe4**

**28. g4-f5 f8xf5!**

**29. ♖h3xf5 e4-c3**

**30. a2-a4 a8-b8**

**31. d1-e1 c3xb1**

**32. e1xb1 b8-b7**

**33. b4-b5 a6xb5**

**34. a4xb5 ♖d8-f6**

**35. ♖f5xf6+**

More chances remained after 35.♖e4 but the exchange of queens looks very tempting.

**35. ... e7xf6**

**36. b5-b6**



Due to the threat of 37.♜c1 Black's position looks very dangerous, but he has an unexpected defence.

**36. ... e5-c3!**

**37. ♜b1-c1 c3-a5**

**38. ♙g1-f1 f6-e5**

**39. ♜c1-a1**

By this moment all the other games in the match had ended, and those players – some in hope, some in fear – followed what happened next.

**39. ... a5-b4**

39...♙c3 was also worth considering..

**40. ♜a1-a7 b7-b8**

41. ♖a7xh7      ♙b4-c5  
42. b6-b7      ♙e5xd5



The first impression is that a draw is inevitable. At such moments it's particularly important not to start panicking but to calmly continue to look for chances.

### 43. ♖h7-c7!

It was this resource that left both Zahar and our team with hopes of success.

43. ...      ♙d5-c4  
44. ♖c7-g7      ♙c4-d3?

A mistake when a draw was only a step away. Black took the step, but... in the opposite direction! It was essential to play 44... ♙b5! 45. ♖xg5 ♖xb7 46. ♖f5 ♙c6 47. ♖xf4 (47... ♙xc5 dxc5 48. ♖xf4 ♙d5 also promises nothing) 47... ♖b1+ 48. ♙e1 d5 and the activity of the black pieces guarantees a straightforward draw.

### 45. h2-h3!

It was this quiet move that Safarli had overlooked. Now he has to accept he's lost some tempi.

45. ...      ♙c5-e3?

It's hard to admit your own mistakes, but it's always better than continuing on a false trail. After the correct

45... ♙c4! 46. ♙e2 ♙b5 White should continue 47. ♙e1! (the rook ending arising after 47... ♙xc5 dxc5 48. ♙d3 (or 48. ♙f3 ♙c6 49. ♖xg5 ♖xb7 50. ♙xf4 ♙b5) 48... ♙b4 49. ♙c2 ♙c4 50. ♖h7 ♙b4 51. ♙d3 ♙b5 52. ♙c3 ♙c6 53. ♙c4 ♖d8 54. ♖h6+ ♙xb7 55. ♖g6 f3! is drawn) and if 47... ♙c6 then 48. ♙c3! White's advantage is obvious, but is it enough to win? After the move in the game White's task becomes simpler.

46. ♖g7-d7      ♙d3-e4  
47. ♙f1-e2      ♙e3xf2  
48. ♙e2xf2      d6-d5  
49. ♙f2-e2      ♙e4-e5

Black's in zugzwang.

50. ♙e2-d3      ♙e5-e6  
51. ♖d7-c7      ♙e6-d6  
52. ♖c7-h7      ♖b8-f8  
53. ♖h7-f7      ♖f8-e8  
54. ♖f7-g7      ♙d6-c6  
55. ♖g7-e7      ♖e8-f8  
56. ♙d3-d4      ♖f8-d8  
57. ♖e7-g7      ♖d8-e8  
58. ♖g7-g6+      ♙c6xb7  
59. ♙d4xd5      f4-f3  
60. g2xf3      ♖e8-h8  
61. ♖g6xg5      ♖h8xh3  
62. f3-f4

The position now on the board is a theoretical win for White.

62. ...      ♙b7-c7  
63. ♙d5-e6      ♖h3-h6+  
64. ♙e6-f7      ♖h6-h7+  
65. ♖g5-g7      ♖h7-h6  
66. f4-f5      ♙c7-d7  
67. f5-f6      ♖h6-h8  
68. ♖g7-g1      1-0

The favourable outcome of that game gave us a narrow win in the match.

Before the final round Ukraine was still in the lead, but our main rivals had also maintained good chances of success, as if the match points were level it was Russia who would become champions. A win against Israel would guarantee our team overall victory, while a draw in the final round would ensure silver, though it might also be enough for gold if the Russian players cracked against Spain. In such a tense situation the obvious choice was to go for solidity, but how can adequate caution be combined with the necessity of playing for a win?

Efimenko gave his own entirely convincing reply. However, the game was cut off before reaching a logical conclusion. A draw had been agreed in the Russia-Spain match and there was no need for another demonstration of technique.

[C54]

Game 91

**Zahar Efimenko**

**Victor Mikhalevski**

Khanty-Mansiysk Olympiad 2010 (11)

- |           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 1. e2-e4  | e7-e5  |
| 2. ♖g1-f3 | ♘b8-c6 |
| 3. ♙f1-c4 | ♙f8-c5 |
| 4. c2-c3  | ♘g8-f6 |
| 5. d2-d3  | d7-d6  |
| 6. ♙c4-b3 | a7-a6  |
| 7. 0-0    | ♙c5-a7 |
| 8. ♚f1-e1 | 0-0    |
| 9. h2-h3  |        |

Efimenko loves to employ such unhurried and apparently unpretentious opening systems.

9. ... ♘c6-e7

Against Zahar people have played 9...h6 10.♘bd2 ♘h5 (Efimenko-Negi, Moscow 2007), and 9...♙e6 10.♙c2 d5

(10...♙e8 11.♘bd2 d5 Efimenko-Ferguson, Isle of Man 2007) 11.exd5 ♙xd5 12.♙g5 ♘d7 Efimenko-Short, Kemer 2007.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 10. ♘b1-d2 | ♘e7-g6 |
| 11. ♘d2-f1 | h7-h6  |
| 12. ♘f1-g3 | ♙f8-e8 |
| 13. d3-d4  | ♙c8-e6 |
| 14. ♙b3-c2 | ♙e6-d7 |

A rare move. Black usually prefers 14...c6 or 14...♘h7. The latter, in particular, was seen in the game Efimenko-Adams, Gibraltar 2007: 14...♘h7 15.♘f5 ♘g5 16.♙e3 exd4 17.cxd4 c5 18.♘xg5 hxg5 and now instead of 19.♙h5 it was worth considering 19.dxc5 ♙xc5 20.♙xc5 dxc5 21.♘d6 ♙e7 22.e5 with better chances for White. In general, the abundance of options gives Black the illusion of perfect safety. In reality, such outwardly simple positions conceal plenty of underwater reefs. One of them emerged in this game.

- |            |        |
|------------|--------|
| 15. ♙c1-e3 | ♙d7-c6 |
| 16. ♙d1-d2 | e5xd4  |
| 17. ♙e3xd4 | ♘g6-e5 |

Only this move is a novelty. Kasimdzhanov against Bologan (Corsica 2006) chose 17...♘d7.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 18. ♙d2-e3! | ♘e5-c4 |
| 19. ♙e3-c1  | ♘c4-e5 |
| 20. ♘f3xe5  | d6xe5  |
| 21. ♙d4xa7  | ♙a8xa7 |
| 22. ♙c1-e3  | ♙a7-a8 |
| 23. ♙a1-d1  |        |

The position has become even more simplified, but Black still has problems.

23. ... ♙d8-e7

23...♘d7!?

24. ♖g3-f5 ♔e7-f8  
25. ♔e3-g3



25. ... g7-g6?!

After the accurate 25...♗h7 with ...g7-g6 to follow it would have been more difficult for White to develop an initiative, but Mikhalevski, true to his active style, strives to provoke a crisis as soon as possible.

26. ♔g3-h4! g6xf5

White would maintain an edge after 26...♗h5 27.♖d2 ♗h7 28.♖ed1 ♗f4 29.♗e3.

27. ♔h4xf5 f5-f4  
28. ♗c2-b3 ♔f8-g7  
29. ♔f6-f5 ♖a8-d8  
30. ♗b3-d5

Another possible plan for White was 30.♗h2 ♖f8 31.g3 but, as usual, Efimenko doesn't avoid simplifications.

30. ... ♗c6xd5  
31. ♖d1xd5 ♔g7-g5  
32. ♔f5xg5+

Now White's main trump is creating a passed pawn on the h-file. The other version of the rook ending 32.♖ed1 ♔xf5 33.exf5 ♖xd5 34.♖xd5 ♔e7 35.f6 ♖e6 36.♖d7 ♖xf6 37.♖xc7 b5 38.♖e7 ♖d6! is harmless for Black.

32. ... h6xg5  
33. ♖e1-d1 ♖d8xd5  
34. ♖d1xd5 ♖e8-e6?!

The passive 34...♗f8? would have made it possible to demonstrate the winning plan in its pure form: 35.♗f1 f6 36.♖d7 ♖e7 37.♖d8+ ♖e8 38.♖xe8+ ♗xe8 39.♗e2 ♗f7 40.♗f3, and after creating a distant passed h-pawn White would win without difficulty.

However, it's much stronger to play 34...♗g7 35.♗f1 ♗f6 36.♖d7 ♖c8 37.♗e2 ♗e6 38.♖d1 ♖g8 39.♗f3 ♖h8 and it's hard for White to improve.

35. ♗g1-f1 ♗g8-f8?!

Here it was also possible to switch to the plan mentioned above, though with a lost tempo: 35...♗g7 36.♗e2 ♗f6 37.♗f3 ♖e8.

36. ♗f1-e2 ♗f8-e7  
37. ♗e2-f3 c7-c6

Once more 37...♗f6 was possible, but White could up the pressure with 38.c4 ♖e8 39.c5 ♗e6 40.b4.

38. ♖d5-d2 a6-a5

38...f6 39.b4!.

39. ♗f3-g4 ♖e6-h6?!



A typically impulsive time-trouble move! However, after 39...f6 40.g3 plenty of difficulties would also lie in wait for Black. At this moment the game was brought to an abrupt end at the behest of the captains. After the forced 40.♔xg5 ♚g6+ 41.♔f5 ♚xg2 42.♔xe5 ♚h2 43.♔xf4 ♚xh3 44.♔g4

♚h1 45.f4 White has decent winning chances or, in any case, much greater chances than in the two previous examples. In the given situation, however, a draw turned out to be even more precious as it guaranteed the team victory.

1/2-1/2

The above examples show that in team events an important role is played by qualities that far from always bring success in individual tournaments. Under conditions of high anxiety and tension, open aggression often leads to miscalculations and blunders. Ambition and a drive to succeed in your own game need to be harmoniously combined with solidity and caution. Good technique in conjunction with composure can sometimes bring amazing results.

How then should you approach games which will determine your overall performance at an event? As if they're turning points in your life or just a routine element of a professional career? Of course, there's no universal recipe, and the author can't guarantee you'll succeed if you follow his recommendations. At the same time, it's essential to be aware of the magnitude of the task ahead of you in each specific case.

Simulating a situation where the World Championship title is at stake is impossible. Such a game is a unique event in the life of any player, or rather, of those few chosen ones who are fated to face such a trial. It's hard to imagine creating such inhuman tension artificially. The deciding game of a rapid event or open, or a round-robin or mini-match, is a different matter entirely. Such trials are possible for anyone, and you have to prepare in advance. A phrase I once heard, 'convince yourself you're not a genius and try to live sensibly', fits such situations perfectly. The problem is that the last game inevitably stands out from everything that preceded it. It alone often determines the success or failure of a whole campaign. It's very important to establish your individual emotional formula. It's fatal to be too calm and deliberately try to lower the significance of the deciding encounter. Even more dangerous, however, is to be over-excited, which can overwhelm a player. You need to find the best possible combination of those two states.

The main difficulty is that determining optimal parameters for this excited composure (or composed excitement) is impossible – it's all too individual. Just recall how your experienced author totally incorrectly evaluated the extreme anxiety of the young Kasparov. As it turned out, it was precisely that heightened state that allowed Garry to maintain the necessary tension on the board. Or think of Spassky's apparently unjustifiably risky decision in his game against Keres. The future World Champion accurately evaluated his inner state, preferring complications to the strict containment dictated by the match situation. Anand's success against Karpov

was also connected to an accurate choice of strategy for a deciding game. He staked everything not on the opening but the middlegame, into which his last remaining energy was thrown.

It's hard to overestimate the significance of the opening in such trials. It should correspond as far as possible to the player's mental state and sporting goal, and it shouldn't provoke any inner discomfort. Here as well, general recommendations are out of place. While your author, for example, was helped in what were successful encounters for him by extravagant variations with an element of bluff, Jussupow in his deciding game against Ivanchuk achieved success through a classical opening and aggressive determination in the middlegame. Kramnik in his game against Leko managed to give even what seemed to be a sharp position a technical character he was comfortable with. Opening surprises are very useful in such situations. Of course, real theoretical discoveries, like the one Polugaevsky used against Kortchnoi, are rare, but sometimes even an innocent transposition of moves can help.

Extreme concentration and determination to achieve your goal – those conditions go without saying. They're important in any game, while in deciding games you simply can't get by without them. There's also another factor, however, without which all the thoughts given above turn into empty words. In order to win any deciding game you need, besides mastery and all the other qualities mentioned, LUCK. That crucial factor also can't be left to the mercy of 'blind chance'. You need to do everything possible to bring fortune over to your side. Believers pray and cleanse their sins. Atheists and agnostics believe, for a time, in miracles, adhering to rituals and superstitions that once helped them to succeed. There are no trifles in such an important matter.

May your chess life, dear reader, include as many deciding games as possible – after all, their number defines the success of your career! That was the bravura note on which I originally wanted to end this book. But then I remembered what a difficult test these life-defining games were for me, what stresses and sleepless nights I suffered due to the need to play for a win in final rounds. Is it right to wish such turmoil on your fellow man? I recall Tigran Petrosian, who as far as possible avoided extreme situations and relied exclusively on luck when they occurred. Or my numerous colleagues who preferred a bad peace to a good fight. However, if you're genuinely ambitious, if your baggage always includes not only a computer but also a marshal's baton, then such trials aren't to be avoided.

# Know yourself

## Epilogue to Chapter 3

Deciding games are where the sporting component of chess comes to the fore, overshadowing other aspects – that's a thought that, one way or another, has shone through the commentary to all the games in this chapter.

During World Championship matches the stress is, of course, immeasurably greater than in the last round of some modest club championship, but climbing Olympus is something very few are fated to do, while almost everyone finds themselves in situations where the whole fate of a tournament depends on a single move. Therefore although you can't guarantee the required result you can at least guarantee the optimal conditions for achieving it. That applies equally to a game between leading grandmasters and a game between chess players known only in their own little town. Although in the latter case the outcome of the 'deciding' game is far from a matter of life or death, it makes sense to take a closer look at the sporting situations that arise.

The task gets a little easier when the desired outcome is a draw. Often that can be achieved simply by proposing it. Even if a peaceful outcome by no means guarantees overall success, but just gives good chances of it, it might make sense to settle for a bird in the hand rather than two in the bush. After all, you'll recall a potential failure for months to come. If it turns out a draw agreement would have allowed you to achieve your goal that will just exacerbate the situation. Moreover, you'll preserve your precious nerve cells which, they say, don't regenerate. If as great a chess player as Tigran Petrosian ALWAYS adopted such an approach, then for a pure amateur it's probably a sensible approach.

However, a diplomatic agreement in chess, as in life, is something that's far from always possible. There are cases when your opponent isn't in as peaceful a mood as you are. It's always good to counter aggression with calm and composure. As far as possible you should choose solid continuations, not embarking on dubious complications, while simultaneously avoiding the temptation to simplify the position at all costs. As we saw in the Kramnik-Leko game, such tactics can lead to failure even for such a wonderful defender as the Hungarian grandmaster. You also shouldn't forget that the player going for a win often crosses the line of acceptable risk, so it's essential to be ready for such gifts of fate. Common sense and caution are by no means synonymous with faintheartedness and cowardice.

The goal is significantly complicated if a draw is equivalent to a defeat, while ultimate success can only be guaranteed by winning that particular game. Here as well, however, there are options. Striving for the initiative from the very first moves, even at the cost of serious risk, is the most natural decision from a psychological point of view. Moreover, it's perfectly justified if the outcome of the game is irrelevant to your opponent. Such a situation occurs time and again in round-robin or team tournaments. In 'Swiss' tournaments, however, it's more common for a draw to suit neither opponent, and in such situations a reckless attack is far from the only weapon. On the contrary, persistence and self-control triumph more frequently. The main thing is to establish your own algorithm that's a perfect fit for your character, temperament and level of preparation.

Incidentally, not a word has yet been said about the importance of opening preparation in deciding games. That's far from accidental, as the opening is the last thing you need to worry about in such situations. It's better, of course, to determine the choice of opening variation in advance while you're still working out the strategy for such an important encounter. Much more important, however, than an accurate move order or the search for a new continuation in a known position is to understand yourself and get into the right mood for the struggle. The fate of such encounters isn't decided, as a rule, in the opening, but by the ability to display your best qualities in extreme conditions. And knowing yourself, your human flaws and virtues, is helpful for all chess players – regardless of age or ability.





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# MODERN CHESS PREPARATION

## Getting Ready for Your Opponent in the Information Age

Winning starts with planning before the game, teaches legendary chess coach Vladimir Tukmakov. In this ground-breaking book he shows how chess preparation has become a systematic process and how today's top players make their game plans.

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**"Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of your opponent, and having a sober awareness of your own shortcomings, will pay dividends at any level, from beginners up to World Champions."**



A former Ukrainian champion, Grandmaster **Vladimir Tukmakov** (born 1946 in Odessa) won many tournaments

and came second in three Soviet championships. After his active career he became an esteemed chess coach. He was non-playing captain of the Ukraine team that won gold at the 36th Chess Olympiad in Calvia, 2004.

